DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 206 303	IR 009 602
AUTHOR	Feilitzen, Cecilia; And Others
TITLE	Open Your Eyes to Children's Viewing: On Children, TV and Radio, Now and in the Future.
INSTITUTION	Swedish Broadcasting Corp., Stockholm.
REPORT NO	ISBN-91-7552-042-7
PUB DATE	77
NOTE	135p.; Translated by Keith Bradfield.
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Broadcast Television; Child Development; Childhood Attitudes; *Childrens Television; Foreign Countries; *Programing (Broadcast); Radio; Television Research; *Television Viewing; *Use Studies; Violence
IDENTIFIERS	*Sweden

ABSTRACT

This review of the findings of Swedish research on children, television, and radio provides summaries of studies conducted over approximately 15 years in four different chapters: children's television viewing and radio listening, how children are influenced by television, children and foreign television programs, and disadvantaged children and TV/radio. Comments on the proposals made by a Swedish government Commission on broadcasting in a 1977 report, which are provided at the end of each relevant research summary, include alternative conclusions and proposals. The extensive bibliography provided includes many items in English as well as Swedish. (MER)

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OPEN YOUR EYES TO CHILDREN'S VIEWING: On Children, TV and radio, now and in the future

by

Cecilia v Feilitzen
Leni Filipson
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Published in Swedish 1977 by Sveriges Radios förlag (The publishing house of the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation), Stockholm.
Three printings until 1979.

ISBN 91-7552-042-7
ISSN 0348-3126

IR009602

1979-08-20
SVERIGES RADIO
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Sweden

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Cecilia v Feilitzen
Leni Filipson
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This book was published in Swedish in 1977. For the present English issue one section, "Television and radio in Sweden", pp 8 - 10 , is rewritten for readers not acquainted with the Swedish broadcasting situation. A few explaining and up-dating notes have also been added throughout the text in the English version. These notes are marked with * .

The authors are researchers - Ph.D. and M.A. in sociology and psychology - at the Audience and Programme Research Department at Sveriges Radio (the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation). The Swedish research on children, television and radio has mainly been financed by Sveriges Radio, and the research reports are available for everyone interested. (As a rule, our studies are published in Swedish only. A few reports, however, are also translated into English.) The authors themselves are responsible for the conclusions and proposals presented in this book. The distribution of work was the following: The authors jointly discussed the chief outlines of the contents. Then, Leni Filipson wrote the chapter "Children's television viewing and radio listening", Cecilia v Feilitzen the chapter "How children are influenced by television", Ingela Schyller the chapter "Purchases of foreign television programmes", and Cecilia v Feilitzen and Leni Filipson together the chapter "Children with different opportunities".

Christina Bergvall in the information group at the Audience and Programme Research Department was the editorial manager.

Maria Wetterström and Carola Markström made the typewritings.

Many people read the manuscripts and gave valuable viewpoints.

Introduction

This book is about children, television and radio. Usually in this context many adults think of children's programmes only. Well, this holds perhaps not for persons who are often together with children and persons who work with culture for children - parents, teachers, producers of children's programmes, writers of books for children etc. Most other people we have met, however, have had such a limited perspective. Unfortunately it is among them one most often finds persons who have much influence in our society and within the mass media - decision makers, opinion makers, business leaders, politicians and planners.

When thinking of children, television and radio, one must not only, or even mainly, take children's programmes into account; but also focus the attention on the adult programmes and the programme and media policy in general. This is the primary theme of our book. We have surveyed the Swedish findings from research on children, television and radio - a research which has been in progress for approximately fifteen years - in some fields with which one should be familiar if one is to make judgments or decisions about adult programmes or the mass media situation at large. Brief research summaries are given in four different chapters: children's television viewing and radio listening, how children are influenced by television, children and foreign television programmes, and so-called under-resourced children and TV/radio. Even if brief, we have tried to make the summaries as complete as possible; the object has been to make them useful for everyone interested in the subject. (But, as a consequence, we do not take up in greater detail research findings that are essential principally for producers.)

This does not imply, of course, that children's programmes are pointless. On the contrary, they are needed more than ever and it is important to improve them continuously and to produce alternatives to the ones that now exist. But what we want to say is, that the positive impulses children get, and could get, from the children's programmes are counter-acted by other, more decisive factors.

When we published this book in Swedish, we wanted to show in a concrete way what consequences the disregard of children's media situation can have for the decision process. A Swedish government commission on broadcasting published at the end of April 1977 its report "Radio and Television 1978-1985". 1) One of our aims was to encourage debate before the parliament half a year later was going to take the final decisions on the proposals made by the Broadcasting Commission. The Commission's use of research data about the child audience was poor and insufficient. If the Commission to a larger extent had set out from facts about children, it should in several cases have arrived at other conclusions and proposals than it now did. Therefore, we presented alternative conclusions and proposals. This criticism is given in separate sections after each research summary and in the concluding discussion.

But our research surveys and related reasoning are, of course, valid also to future broadcasting activities in general, since we deal with such subjects as the responsibility of radio and television for the child audience, daytime transmissions on television and satellite broadcasting, violence-as-entertainment etc. We also believe our summaries, conclusions and proposals can be of interest to an international public.

Many people are of the opinion that the deficient application of research results from the behavioural and social sciences generally, is a problem of communication.

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1) SOU 1977:19 Radio och tv 1978-1985. Förslag från Radioutredningen (Radio and Television 1978-1985. Proposal by the Broadcasting Commission). Stockholm: Liber Förlag 1977.

That the research reports are brushy and written in an abstract style. Or that the mimeos are hidden in the archives and are next to impossible to get hold of.

To some extent, this is true. However, we ask ourselves if there are not other, more crucial causes. Was it really the case that the Broadcasting Commission's proposals were due to inaccessible research data and lack of knowledge? To shut one's eyes to children's situation is a common phenomenon in social planning, cultural policy, various government studies etc. The good will to improve children's conditions is in practice often overridden by other, seemingly, more urgent needs.

Was not the Broadcasting Commission instead one of many symptoms of the fact that our society is segregated and unjust? I.e. that various groups and social sectors are so delimited from each other that the children are forgotten or looked upon as an outside minority group? That children themselves have small opportunities to influence their situation? That most adults do not protect children's interests either, since the need for children is not as great as it used to be? And that only certain groups of children and adults - those who are not "under-resourced", "disadvantaged" or "underprivileged" - have power and opportunities to make their voices heard?

We hope, however, that the frequent disregard of research facts about children mostly is a problem of communication. That is one of the reasons why we wrote this book.

Stockholm, August 1979.

Cecilia v Feilitzen
Leni Filipson
Ingela Schyller

Television and Radio in Sweden

Since we - in separate sections after each research summary - shall present critical viewpoints on the report of the Swedish Broadcasting Commission, we will give a short account of the organization and goals of broadcasting in Sweden.

Right from the beginning it has been held in Sweden that radio and television should be independent of both private interests and state control, or, in other words, an independent public service. Up to now, only Sveriges Radio (the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation) has been entitled to broadcast radio and television programmes. Sveriges Radio is a joint-stock corporation, owned by the "popular movements" 1) (60 %), the press (20 %) and industry and business enterprise (20 %). Radio and TV are totally free of commercial advertising and derive instead their income from receiver license fees levied on all owners of television sets (with the exception of school programmes, and radio programmes abroad, which get their money directly from the state).

The organizational structure and overriding goals for broadcasting have been set forth by the parliament and government. This is documented principally in the Radio Law and in the Agreement between Sveriges Radio and the state. Apart from this, neither the state nor anyone else outside the Corporation has a right to influence programming. Viewers and listeners, however, may complain against programmes to an independent board of review, the Radio Council, which then decides post facto whether

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1) These nation-wide movements, most of which were founded in the latter half of the 19th century, include adult education associations, temperance unions, evangelical churches and, not least, the labour movement.

or not the programme in question conflicted with the overriding goals.

There are two television channels, broadcasting a combined total of about 80 hours a week, mainly during evening hours. The radio has three channels: Programme 1, which chiefly transmits the spoken word, Programme 2, which mainly transmits school broadcasts and serious music, and Programme 3, which mainly transmits light music ("Radio Melody") and local radio.

The overriding goals stipulate, among other things, that programming "shall assert the fundamental ideas of a democratic form of government, as well as the principle of all men's equal value and of the individual's freedom and dignity". "The programmes are to provide knowledge and impressions, pass on experience and offer good entertainment. They are to be so designed that their quality, availability and diversity reasonably satisfy varying needs and interests of the people of this country". Programming shall also strive for "impartiality and factuality" and for "extensive freedom of speech and of information".

These overriding goals were formulated by the Broadcasting Commission we refer to, and were accepted by the parliament. They are thus the ones which regulate the activities of Sveriges Radio 1978-1985, and they differ only slightly from the wordings which were in force before. In the text we will cite these and other formulations and viewpoints made by the Broadcasting Commission. Our discussion, however, focuses on those suggestions presented by the Commission which we consider are of special relevance for children's situation. Thus, the main points we shall deal with in the separate sections after the research summaries are the following:

. daytime transmissions on television
. co-ordination of radio programmes for children
(see the chapter "Children's television viewing and radio listening")

. elements of violence in the programmes
. the programme activities directed towards children and

  youth, and the responsibility for the child and youth audience

(see the chapter "How children are influenced by television")

- the purchase activities
- dubbing of foreign children's programmes

(see the chapter "Purchases of foreign television proprogrammes")

- "increased attention to various disadvantaged groups"

(see the chapter "Children with different opportunities")

Children's Programmes on Television and Radio

During the past ten years, the culture with which children are confronted has been the subject of heated debate in Sweden, above all among those who themselves work with children. A great deal has also been done for children as regards, for example, alternative music and drama, and a different kind of comics and magazines, even if such projects, in terms of volume, are but drops in the ocean. Other examples are the cultural activities arranged in certain libraries, and the efforts at picture analysis made in some schools. The group within the National Commission for the Children's Environment* that, in 1975, considered the cultural situation of children, also recommended increased resources for alternatives to the overwhelming "trash" culture.

Among the mass media, only books, television, and radio are in fact at present in a position to offer children a relatively rich and variegated cultural supply. Television and radio are also the most easily accessible media.

In most countries, children's programmes on television and radio have traditionally been accorded a low status in the corporations concerned, compared with programmes for adults. The situation is worst of all at the television and radio corporations with no separate divisions or departments for children's programmes. When such departments have been created, the situation has altered considerably. The department's collective knowledge of the children's situations, and the greater opportunities for contacts with children and others outside the corporation, have led to greater demands for quality, and thus more and better programmes. Formal measures to protect the interests of children would thus appear necessary in the case of television and radio.

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* This commission was the first major government commission to investigate the life situation of Swedish children, with the emphasis on preschool children.

That special programmes should be produced for children and young people is in Sweden considered self-evident. Children, like adults, must be offered entertaining and activating programmes which are at the same time comprehensible. And the communicating of a content in a form suitable for children makes great demands of the producers.

The situation as regards children's programmes is much brighter in Sweden than in many places in the world. On television, the supply of children's programmes was increased when the two-channel system was introduced in 1969. The children's divisions at TV 1 and TV 2 now account for 12 % of the total supply of programmes. In an ordinary week, this means about 5 ½ hours for pre-school children (3-6 years of age), and another 5 ½ hours for the "intermediates" (7-12 years of age). Children's programmes are broadcast at regular times, mostly in the late afternoon, and they are for the most part protected from competition from programmes on the other channel.

The majority of radio programmes for children, on the other hand, particularly those for small children, are broadcast on P 1 (Programme 1), which means they face tough competition from P 3 (the channel for light music). In an ordinary week, the "Children's Radio" broadcasts for about 10 hours, half for small children and half for those between 7 and 13 (accounting together for about 2 % of the total supply of radio programmes).

For some time now, children's programmes on both radio and television have been allocated the same sort of economic and other resources as programmes for adults, as measured in per cent of broadcasting time.

Outside Sveriges Radio, however, the programmes for children are largely ignored, as is the case in most other countries. Advance information and reviews in the press, for example, are microscopically small by comparison with what is written about programmes for adults.

Programmes for young people are also feeling the pinch. In the case of radio, the four divisions for young people's programmes in Stockholm and the provinces still have less adequate resources for their programmes. In television, the absence of any departments for youth programmes, in combination with financial cuts, has meant the almost total disappearance of youth programmes from the screen for several years. (At present, however, a few programmes for young people are on the air again.)

Television and radio in Sweden have, according to the Agreement between Sveriges Radio and the state, a wide variety of tasks: to provide information, offer cultural orientation, stimulate debate, entertain etc. etc. 1) Sveriges Radio is also an independent corporation in the service of the general public: it thus has a responsibility towards its viewers and listeners.

What has this meant for children's programmes, in the light of what we know of the situation of children today? And now that we know something about how children use and are influenced by television and radio?

To take some examples of tendencies in current children's programmes: an effort is made to deal with all subjects and to portray them more realistically than previously. It is attempted to create exciting, amusing, and essential drama and fantasy, and to combat the sex-roles and violence-as-entertainment. Programmes are designed to encourage the children's self-confidence, ability to empathise, creativity, independence, activity and critical thought. There is a concern to extend the direct contacts with children, and to concentrate on those children with the least adequate overview and the least opportunity to influence their own situation. Efforts are made, in various ways, to promote increased communication between children and adults, for example by producing children's programmes that are also attrac-

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1) For Sveriges Radio's general objectives see the chapter "Television and radio in Sweden".

tive to adults, and by getting certain children's programmes shown at prime time in the evening. Programmes for immigrant children are broadcast four days a week in Finnish, Serbo-Croat, Turkish and Greek, respectively, (TV 1); there are also several television programmes for and about children with impaired hearing.

What children's programmes actually achieve is another question. As with all programmes, there is much to discuss and much to improve. Also, the potential of radio and television is limited. "You don't get hugs from a radio or television set." It is obvious that the fundamental causes of abuses in society neither are brought about by radio and television, nor can be cured by them.

But radio and television do make their contributions, and it is therefore important to structure these contributions in the best possible way. And an important factor in this context is that children do not only watch and listen to children's programmes, nor are they affected only by children's programmes. Adult programmes play an even greater part.

To deal with child viewers as a group per se, as does the Broadcasting Commission's report, can thus have serious consequences. 1)

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1) 22 % of the Swedish population is between 0 and 15 years of age.

We have chosen to call "children" those between 0 and 15 years of age, the latter being the age at which compulsory schooling terminates.

Children's Television Viewing and Radio Listening

Television viewing

Television is the mass medium most used by children. Practically all children in Sweden have a television at home, and over 70 % see the programmes in colour.* This means that the children were born in an environment of which television constitutes a natural part. Even if children do not watch attentively during their first years, they do get glimpses of what is taking place on the screen, and experience it in their own way. Children are being encouraged to sit in front of the television at increasingly early ages.

How much do children watch television?

By the age of three, the majority of Swedish children are regular television viewers. Even at that time, they watch for more than an hour a day. Viewing subsequently increases with the age of the child, to reach a peak at between 10 and 12, when children watch for almost 2 ½ hours a day. After the age of 12 viewing gradually falls off, only to start increasing again in adulthood. The adult population, on average, watches television for about 1 ½ hours a day. Schoolchildren are thus large consumers compared with adults.**

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* More recent investigations show that possession of colour television has risen. In 1978 approximately 80 % of all Swedish children saw the programmes in colour.

** In 1978 the adult population watched, on average, for almost two hours a day, while the 9-14-year-olds watched for about 2 1/4 hours.

But there are considerable variations in the viewing frequency. During a winter week when there are attractive programmes, children between the ages of 9 and 14 can sometimes spend over 20 hours watching television, which is more than a half-time job. During the brighter part of the year, both children and adults watch less. 1)

Throughout the year, however, children are the group using television most, if we consider the percentage watching every day. On an ordinary day, about 90 % of children of all ages use the television.

Viewing also varies considerably with the days of the week. This applies mainly to schoolchildren, while the younger children seem to watch roughly as often on weekdays as at week-ends.

On Fridays and Saturdays it happens sometimes that 100 % of all children between the ages of 9 and 14 watch television.

But even if almost all children watch television every day, and the viewing time is fairly long, this does not mean that all of them are large consumers of television. The figures we have given on television viewing among children are averages, and by no means apply to all individual children. Both extremely low-level consumers and extremely high-level consumers are to be found in all age groups.

Even in the preschool group, 16 % of the children devote three or more hours to television viewing, on an average day. On Saturdays and Sundays the figure is higher, around 25 %. Among schoolchildren, a good quarter watch for more than 3 hours a day, and 8 % of them for more than 5 hours.

What children watch this much television? We know, among other things, that the children of parents with a

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1) Television viewing among the population 9-79 years of age is investigated continuously. Data are reported for different age groups, including 9-14. We therefore have more data on this particular age group than on children of other ages. When we speak below of "schoolchildren" it is usually the 9-14-year-olds we mean.

lower socio-economic status watch more television than the children of parents with a higher status. The same is true to an even greater extent of the parents themselves.

Another group of children watching television a lot is those who have problems in their contacts with parents, peers, or the school. This is often reflected in their being aggressive, depressed, or experiencing anxiety.

What time of day do children watch television?

It is commonly imagined that children do not watch television late at night. And in the case of the smaller children, those between 3 and 8, it is indeed rare for them to watch after 9 o'clock, at least on weekdays. On Saturdays and Sundays, however, quite a few of the younger children watch late in the evening: one fifth of all 7- and 8-year-olds are still watching at 10.30. (Evening viewing, of course, is largely determined by how programmes are scheduled.)

The truth about the 9-14-year-olds, however, is that they allocate as high a proportion of their viewing as adults to after 9.30. Even on weekdays, roughly one fifth are watching after 9.30. On Fridays and Saturdays, late viewing can be almost 100 %.

What do children watch?

When the two-channel system was introduced in Sweden in the autumn of 1969, it was largely in order to give viewers a greater freedom of choice than previously. What freedom of choice, then, do children actually have, and how do they select programmes? Small children, of course, have no overall picture of what is being broadcast, and are largely dependent on the decisions and selections of adults.

To a large extent the 3-8-year-olds also watch the programmes that are produced for them, 45 % of their viewing time being devoted to children's programmes. It has also been found that, on a given day, roughly half of the 3-8-year-olds only see children's programmes, while a few per cent only see adult programmes. But on average as much as 55 % of viewing time is devoted to adult programmes of different kinds. The same proportion of their viewing time as children devote to children's programmes (45 %) is devoted to adult programmes of the lighter type, i.e. entertainment, feature films, fiction programmes, series, and magazines. And 10 % of the time they devote to other adult programmes.

The older children, the 9-14-year-olds, devote only 16 % of their viewing time to children's programmes. It is true that certain children's programmes are extremely popular in this age group, and particularly the 9 and 10-year-olds tend to watch children's programmes. But for the most part this age group watches adult programmes, above all feature films, magazines, Swedish and foreign series, sport programmes, and thrillers. Comparing the children's choices with those of adults, we find great similarities. One important difference, however, must be noted, namely that the children devote less viewing time to, above all, news and other informative programmes. Children up to the age of 14 are thus more pronouncedly oriented towards entertainment than adults.

We observed earlier on that the 9-14-year-olds watch as much as adults even after 9.30 in the evening. Since, however, they are more concerned with entertainment than adults, their late viewing is more concentrated to entertainment programmes. This means that many of the programmes broadcast late in the evening to indicate their unsuitability for children, note very high ratings precisely in that group of viewers. Together with the "youth" group (15-24), the 9-14-year-olds constitute the group that more than any other watches, for example, the late-evening violence programmes. In the debate as to whether it is justified to broadcast various programmes exploiting violence-as-entertainment, it is sometimes maintained that one must give the viewers what they want. It is thus the tastes of the youngest age groups that one is primarily encouraging by recurrent series with detectives and violence. The older people get, the less such series appear to interest them.

Are there, then, no alternatives for these age groups? We know that they generally speaking select entertainment and reject news and traditional information programmes. This, however, does not necessarily mean that they must get their entertainment in the form of violence. Many other series are popular among children, both those with a more everyday content and those that are more unrealistic and fantastical.

In recent time, the most popular programmes included "Emergency Service" as well as programmes produced for children, such as "The Children of Bullerby" (an Astrid Lindgren series), "The White Stone", and "Shorty" (two other large Swedish productions). All these programmes noted average viewing figures of over 70 % among children between 9 and 14 years of age. It is usual for series to note increasing figures as they progress, and the last episode of "Emergency Service" had a record audience in the 9-14 age group, around 90 %. Otherwise, a figure like this is usually only noted for old Swedish feature films or the Walt Disney programme at Christmas time (the same Disney programme has been broadcast on Christmas Eve for many years).

A suitable transmission time can to some extent affect the popularity of a children's programme. The broadcasting, for example, of children's series at 7.30 on Saturday evenings has surely contributed to the high viewing figures noted among both adults and children. The programmes acquire a higher status in this way, and are not regarded as "just children's programmes".

The television viewing of parents

The results of many investigations show that the viewing of children often follows that of the parents: if the parents watch a lot of television, then so do the children. Does viewing, in families that watch television a lot, not then become a source of common experiences, something that enriches the atmosphere in the household and provides new subjects of conversation? A necessary condition for parents and children having any joint benefit from programmes is that they should sometimes watch them together. But this is rare, at least in the case of children's programmes. Small children always watch "their" programmes alone, since the majority of parents use the television as a babysitter. Most parents consider it should be the responsibility of Sveriges Radio at least to make the children's programmes "safe" for children.

Only between 5 and 10 % of the parents of small children normally watch a programme for small children. Special children's series, however, that the parents are amused by, have succeeded in reaching greater numbers of parents. Examples are series like "Five ants are more than four elephants" (a Swedish series inspired by "Sesame Street") and "Emil of Lönneberga" (an Astrid Lindgren series).

In the evenings, however, many parents sit and watch television together with their small children. We do not know how many children sit alone in front of the television also in the evenings.

Older children also often sit alone and watch "their" programmes. The same principle applies here, the parents watch only if they are interested themselves. During a period in March 1977, a study was made of how frequently the parents of 7-12-year-olds watched the programmes produced for these ages. Viewing varied between 0 and 11 % for different programmes. A programme series for schoolchildren, the particular aim of which was to get parents and children talking to each other, was broadcast during the period. When three programmes in the series had been broadcast, 12 % of the parents had talked to their children about something relating to the programmes, and almost twice as many had seen one of the programmes.

The majority of parents have a positive attitude towards television both for themselves and for the children, and are often uncritical of what is offered. The children are encouraged to watch television, and are thus brought to believe that viewing is so important as to warrant the discontinuation of almost any other activity.

Small children are usually told by their parents to watch children's programmes, and as a rule they watch the adult programmes selected by the parents or siblings. Schoolchildren are instead greatly influenced by their peers and their choice of programmes: the watching of certain programmes confers status. They keep careful track of what is being broadcast, and choose the programmes they consider most attractive.

Viewing in other countries

It is common to compare television viewing in Sweden with viewing in other countries, and conclude that viewing in Sweden is in spite of everything on a fairly modest scale. In countries with more channels and longer broadcasting hours, both children and adults watch television more than they do in Sweden. In Denmark and Norway, which have only one domestic channel, the adults seem to watch roughly as much as adults in Sweden, while the children watch slightly less than in Sweden. Common to the majority of countries with television is that viewing falls off in the teens; this is the case, for example, in both the Soviet and the USA.

The USA is frequently quoted in Sweden as a bad example. The figures given on children's viewing there vary from one research report or article to another. One set of figures is that the children, when they leave school, have on average spent 11,000 hours at their school-desks, while at home in front of their television sets they have sat for 15,000 hours and seen 350,000 advertisements and 13,000 murders rolling past on the screen. An American 5-year-old watches for 23.5 hours a week, an American adult for 44 hours a week. (The corresponding figures in Sweden are 11.5 and 10-11 hours, respectively.) Viewing at the week-ends is particularly intensive in the USA, since practically all channels run children's programmes non-stop from early morning until noon.

In countries like the USA, where programmes are broadcast practically around the clock, viewing has increasingly become a secondary activity. People leave the television on, so that they will notice when anything interesting appears. Active viewing is thus less high than suggested by the figures. Possibly, the same development will occur in Sweden; it has already happened with radio listening.

It seems, however, that children watch more actively and intensely than adults, at least as long as viewing is kept within reasonable limits. The question is whether a development towards less active viewing on the part of children or adults is desirable, and, if not, how it can be avoided.

Television viewing has also altered over time. Since, however, major changes are being discussed in Sweden in the context of daytime transmissions, satellite television, videograms, and text and cable television, we shall discuss these and further possible changes in television viewing when we deal with these media at the end of the chapter.

Radio listening

The radio is perhaps the mass medium with which children come into contact at the earliest stage. Sweden's "Radio Melody", Programme 3, provides a sound-curtain in many homes while the children are still in the cradle. We know that both housewives and employed women with children themselves listen more to radio than the average population. They listen most of all in the morning, and almost exclusively to Programme 3, P 3. Gradually the children begin to listen more attentively to the music, and to such speech as may be interspersed between the records.

At least up until the age of four, the children are entirely dependent on some adult turning on the radio for them, and telling them what programmes they can listen to. The listening of small children thus reflects more the parents' interest in the radio and different programmes than the children's own preferences. Here as in many other fields the habits of the parents influence the children: the more the parents listen to radio, the more the children listen. Fairly few parents, however, are interested in making the children aware of the radio other than as a medium for music.

Programmes for small children are broadcast mainly on Programme 1, P 1, and at the same time as different music programmes or news are broadcast on P 3. The majority of parents are poorly informed concerning children's radio programmes. Since the parents listen almost exclusively to P 3, they seldom or never come into contact with such programmes.

There are radio sets at practically all day nurseries and playschools, but they are hardly used. If one listens, one listens to P 3.

At the age of three or four, children can begin to listen more actively also to spoken programmes. We know that about one fifth of all children of preschool age* listen to some programme from the Children's Radio on an ordinary day. Half of all preschool children, however, never come into contact with the spoken programmes broadcast by the Children's Radio. Since radio listening is almost always a secondary activity for both children and adults, i.e. they listen while doing something else, it is difficult to give exact listening figures for, say, P 3. Many people do not even think of the fact that the radio is on. Particularly in the case of small children, who seldom or never take the initiative in switching on, it is difficult to know what proportion of the day they devote in all to listening.

When the children reach school age, we know a little more about their listening. Just under half of children in the 9-14 age group listen to the radio on weekdays, and rather more on Saturdays and Sundays. They listen on average for about one hour a day. Compared with young people over 15, and adults, considerably fewer 9-14-year-olds use the radio. This applies mainly to weekdays, the difference on Saturdays and Sundays being less marked.

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* Later figures, from November 1977, suggest that the number is now fewer, approximately 15 %.

Even if we cannot quantify the listening of small children precisely, we do know that children of all ages are the group which uses the radio least.

How do children select radio programmes?

At the age of five or six, children themselves begin to keep track of the times of radio programmes, or themselves turn on the radio when they feel like listening. Sometimes it can be in order to hear children's programmes, but it is usually to hear music, if things seem too quiet at home.

The programmes for small children have their largest audience among 5- and 6-year-olds, half of whom usually listen on occasion. The 7- and 8-year-olds listen roughly as much to radio programmes for small children, and some children continue to listen to them when they are older.

The older children become, the more consciously they select programmes. Schoolchildren choose almost exclusively music and sports programmes, and entertainment that includes music in some form. The most popular programmes, such as Swedish "Top of the Pops" and "Ring for a record" are listened to by roughly one third of all children between 9 and 14. Many schoolchildren also listen to the block of light music on P 3 in the mornings, to request programmes like "Up to 13" and "Request Hour", and to pure pop programmes like "Cavalcade" and "Discorama". The programmes broadcast by Youth Radio have lost listeners since they were shifted from P 3 to P 1, particularly among the 9-14-year-olds.

When it comes to switching between the different radio channels, Swedes have shown themselves somewhat sluggish. Channel loyalty, or the unwillingness to change channels, is strong. The great majority of listeners only hear P 3. Schoolchildren, too, listen mostly to one channel, but they also switch to popular programmes, such as sports programmes, on the neighbouring channels.

Has radio listening changed?

We can note that the listening curve for 9-14-year-olds has shown a declining trend over the past four years. The decline is particularly noticeable on weekdays and Saturdays. And in about ten years only, the numbers of small children listening to the Children's Radio has fallen sharply. Even the small children now listen mostly to music.

For long periods, the radio has had its largest audience among young people (the 15-24-year-olds). But even this group now listens less. Measurements during the last two years show that this group today listens to roughly as great (or small) an extent as the other age groups.

Why do children and young people listen less to the radio now? As we have already said, the parents' habits and attitudes to radio provide part of the reason. Other media have also played a part. When television arrived, it was found that the character of radio listening altered. Increased television viewing among children, and the frequent use of records and cassettes, have surely also contributed to the decline in radio listening as a whole among this group.

Other mass media

The daily press

Radio, television, and the daily press are often regarded as the three main media for the adult population. The ether media and the daily press, it is said, complement each other in a meaningful way. For the majority of children, however, the daily press constitutes no such complement or alternative. An inability to read makes it difficult for the smaller children to digest for themselves the contents of newspapers and other printed media, while it is seldom that parents communicate information from the daily papers to their children.

It is true that almost all children have access to some daily papers. 97 % of all households with schoolchildren take at least one newspaper. Only 13 % of schoolchildren read no newspaper whatsoever.

Naturally enough, the reading of newspapers increases with age. But children, once they have learned to read in their first years at school, use the press in an entirely different way from adults. The time that children devote to newspaper reading is much less than with adults.

By content, two categories of material take pride of place in newspaper reading by children, namely radio and television programmes, and strip cartoons. These are followed by the categories accidents, crime, and the entertainment ads. War and sports also come high up the list. If we compare the children's selection of content with what adults tend to read, we find a number of differences. The adult interest in the family pages, advice columns, and domestic news is not shared by the children, while the children's interest in the strip cartoons and entertainment ads is not shared by the adults.

To sum up, we can say that the daily press is of less importance to children than adults. The younger children hardly come into contact with it, and it is apparently not until the Upper Level of the Basic School that newspapers acquire any greater importance as a medium for what we usually mean by information. The children's choice of content corresponds on the whole to their choice of television programmes, which is to say they choose entertainment and sensations or catastrophes, while rejecting more serious information.

Books

If the daily press provides no alternative for the children, what mass media do they use? Totally speaking, children have fewer alternatives and possibilities than adults, owing to practical restrictions.

Books are undoubtedly of great importance for children. Even at the ages of 3 and 4, 80 % of children "read" books or have books read to them at least once a week. Numerous studies have been made of children's reading, but most of them are unfortunately out of date. Studies made during the Sixties showed that children's reading peaked out around the age of 12, after which it fell off sharply.

Studies made in the early Seventies indicate that the structure of children's reading had, at that time, not changed for several decades. The content in which a given age group was interested appeared to be the same as 25 years previously. A comparison with earlier studies, however, indicate that young people in the early Seventies began to read adult literature at the age of 15 or 16, while previously many continued to read books for young people until they were about 20.

It is possible that children are now beginning to read adult books at an even earlier stage. The supply of books for children and young people is admittedly greater than it was some ten years ago, but we also know that reading is greatly influenced by, for example, television programmes and series. The demand for books that have been adapted for television (or from television) is normally large. Another reason why children now probably read more adult literature may be the strong expansion of light fiction, or "fruit-stall literature".

Comics and magazines

Another mass medium with which children come into contact at an early age is the comic magazine. Comics are read at least as much as books. Even at preschool age, almost all children "read" comics, and the majority continue to do so until fairly high up in the regular school.

There are some 70 different comic magazines on the Swedish market, with aggregate sales of around 40 million copies a year. Almost 90 % are of foreign origin. Popular television and film personalities are exploited in this context by commercial forces.

Ordinary weekly magazines, which are widespread among adults, are little read by children, at least by the youngest. Not until children reach their teens do they begin to read the weekly press on any scale.

Records and cassettes

As already mentioned, both children and adults use radio mainly as a music medium. In this field it encounters competition from cassette-players and record-players, both of which are to be found in most families. Schoolchildren and sometimes even younger children tend to have their own sets. The smaller children, however, listen fairly little to records and cassettes, even if this is more encouraged by parents than, say, radio listening. But the older children are frequent users of records and cassettes:

83 % of all children between 9 and 14 have access to a record-player, and even more have cassette-players. Both these are also in frequent use, above all the cassette-players. 43 % of the children play cassettes every day, and a further 20 % between 3 and 5 days a week. The record-player is used every day by just under a third of all children between 9 and 14, and a further fifth play records more than 3 days a week.

What sort of music do they play? Do they have a few records and cassettes that they play over and over? All we can say is that ownership of records and cassettes is high. 28 % of 9-14-year-olds have access to more than 50 LP records, and the number of cassettes is still higher. Empty cassettes dominate rather than pre-recorded, the children prefer to record for themselves the music they like.

The genre of music most frequently played by children and young people is pop, but dance music and general popular music are also greatly favoured. 40 % of children spend more than 4 hours a week playing pop. Only 6 % of 9-14-year-olds never play pop themselves. Classical music, folk music, jazz, and spiritual music are hardly ever played.

Cinema, theatre, exhibitions, museums

Even if many people are doing their best to reach children at an early age with various cultural activities, such as theatre, exhibitions, and children's films, the supply in these fields is still small. To give one example, only one in 20 Swedish-produced films is for children. The majority of films seen by children are thus produced and imported for adult audiences, but are also allowed for children.*

Most preschool children in Sweden seldom or never go to the pictures, nor do they go to the theatre, exhibitions, or museums. The older children go to the pictures more than children of preschool age, but the cinema is still more or less overshadowed by other media. The majority of cinema-goers are in their later youth.

Television viewing in the near future

Since Sveriges Radio first started broadcasting on 1 January 1925, the ether media have been in a continuous process of development. Among other things, television, colour television, and stereo transmissions have been introduced. Transmission times for the different media have increased sharply, and additional channels have been introduced in both radio and television. Further increases in transmission times are under discussion. A fourth radio channel, daytime transmissions on television, satellites, and videograms have been proposed.

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* In Sweden all films are checked by a governmental board before they are shown at cinemas. The board decides upon the following age limits: allowed for all children, from 7 years of age, from 11 ages, or from 15 years. It can also entirely forbid a film to be shown.

A daytime block on television

The Broadcasting Commission proposes a block of daytime programmes on television. An important aim of these transmissions would be to offer services to people who are prevented for various reasons from watching in the evenings. They would also give increased freedom of choice to those working at home, and to pensioners. The daytime block, it is said, "should be of mixed composition, and consist of informative programmes as well as of entertaining human-interest programmes, and of both original broadcasts and repeats".

What would happen to children's viewing if television increased its daytime transmissions? Certain Swedish data are available, from which we can draw some conclusions.

Following the introduction of a second television channel in 1969, the adult population at large did not increase its viewing. Only the pensioners spent more time in front of their sets than before.

The data obtained in children's studies reveal, however, that children of all ages actually doubled their viewing, compared with the period when there was only one channel.

The main explanation is probably that the supply of children's programmes, which are broadcast during late afternoon, increased sharply when a second channel was introduced; the supply of programmes of interest to children (children's programmes + certain adult programmes) thus began to be transmitted during greater parts of the day than previously. In the case of adults, the supply of programmes was not extended in time in the same way. It is precisely in countries with television on more than one channel and transmitting for greater parts of the day than in Sweden that television viewing is on a greater scale.

Repeat broadcasts of television programmes during the day are now usually allocated to Saturdays and Sundays. In recent years, however, Sveriges Radio has experimented with daytime repeats also on weekdays (between 14.30 and 16.30 hours, in 1975 and

1976).

One of the target groups on which particular emphasis was placed were the shift-workers (approximately 3 % of the population), together with other groups who had difficulty watching in the evenings.

The principles employed in selecting repeats were that they should be taken from the previous week's original transmissions, and be roughly representative of that week's supply as regards the different types of programme.

A study made on the population between 9 and 79 years of age during the experimental period in November 1975 showed that average viewing figures per programme were about 2 %. 30-40 % of this small audience had also seen the entire programme before. At the time of the original transmission, less than 10 % of the repeat viewers were prevented from seeing the programme, while a further 10 % were watching the other channel.

People prevented from evening viewing (i.e. the target group for the repeats) were thus relatively infrequent among the repeat viewers.

Instead, about half those watching the repeats were mainly schoolchildren and other students, plus people working at home. Pensioners were another large group. These are groups which are not normally prevented from watching regularly in the evenings, which means that their demand for repeats is probably limited - to a large extent, their watching of repeats can be a way of passing the time, and seeing a programme twice.

As we have said, even small children like to watch entertaining adult programmes. And parents tend to use television as a babysitter, particularly during the day. In all certainty, quite a few small children must also have seen the daytime repeats.

Viewing by schoolchildren of the different categories of programme represented during the experimental period studied followed their usual pattern, which is to say they chose more than the adults entertainment, and rejected information. The most popular programme during the repeat period, the American entertainment series "Rhoda", was seen, on each occasion of transmission, by about one quarter of all 9-14-year-olds.

It is conceivable that television viewing replaces other more desirable activities, and for certain individuals leads to increased passivity and isolation. Schoolchildren and preschool children are among the groups with plenty of leisure time. We also know that they are greatly interested in television, and that this does not only apply to the programmes specially produced for them.

A possible effect of daytime transmissions could thus be to increase the already relatively high television consumption of these groups. In general, we can assume those watching the daytime programmes will increase their total consumption of television. If one devotes part of one's free time to daytime viewing, one still has the same amount of free time in the evening to devote to, for example, watching television. Since both pensioners and children are already high-level consumers, this would increase the differences in television viewing. The extent to which different groups watch daytime transmissions will also depend on what programmes are sent.

Since it is intended that the daytime block should include a variety of programmes, there will always be programmes attractive to the younger viewers. Some programmes are transmitted in the evenings partly because they are unsuitable for small children. If these programmes are transmitted during the day, this protection will no longer exist.

The Nordic television satellite

Nordic collaboration in radio and television has been the subject of several commissions of enquiry over the years. The latest (Spring 1977) has suggested that a Nordic television satellite could offer each of the Nordic countries the opportunity to receive the programmes of all the other Nordic countries, in addition to its own output.*

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* Replies from the bodies to whom this report was circulated for comment were such that a new study had to be made before taking a decision.

The commission presents three main arguments in favour of such an exchange over the frontiers:

- it would strengthen the Nordic cultural community
- it would increase individual freedom of choice, by affording access to programmes in neighbouring countries
- it would offer Nordic immigrants a chance of seeing programmes from their own countries.

The commission has concentrated its work on two conceivable main alternatives. The one is a total exchange of programmes, with the direct transmission of all existing radio and television programmes to all the Nordic countries. The other is an edited Nordic channel, on which part of the Nordic programmes already produced would be selected and translated. These programmes would then be transmitted over the entire Nordic area for about 25 hours a week, with at time lag of about two or three weeks.

The bulk of the Nordic broadcasting corporations' television transmissions are during roughly the same time interval during the evening. The total alternative would thus mean, above all, that viewers were confronted at the same point in time by several alternatives; it would always be impossible to take in anything like the entire great supply.

Certain changes, however, would be noticeable. On an average weekday afternoon, for example, preschool programmes alone would extend over about three consecutive hours!

Even if certain precautionary measures were taken, the risks of such a total alternative are obvious, particularly in respect of children. We know, for example, that the parents of many small children encourage television viewing, and that an increased supply for children would undoubtedly increase the children's television viewing, which is already sufficient. With such a system, the older children (and adults) would have greater opportunities to tack between the different channels, choosing the lighter programmes. In all certainty, the children would often select purchased entertainment programmes rather than programmes produced by the neighbouring countries themselves. The first objective would thus be lost, in favour of greater freedom of choice.

It is envisaged that an edited Nordic channel would reflect the domestic production of the contributing companies in a representative manner. But no co-ordination of transmission times between the national programmes is judged to be possible, other than in exceptional cases. The transmission times of a further channel, the Nordic channel, would be co-ordinated with the existing channels. The problem of an increase in the transmission of purchased entertainment programmes is eliminated in this alternative. A great deal hangs on the co-ordination of programmes, if the objectives laid down are to be achieved.

Such an alternative, however, seems unrealistic, in that it presupposes encroachments on the independence of the broadcasting corporations. Various combinations of the two alternatives are also conceivable.

Videograms

Another technical innovation currently being discussed in Sweden is the videogram. Video-recorders of different kinds, which can record and play back television programmes, are already available on the Swedish market, even if they have not become widespread for home use owing to the high cost. In Sweden at present we have just under 10,000 recorders of this kind, but only a small proportion are used in the home. Technological development will probably produce cheaper alternatives in the near future.

In countries like Japan and the USA, where video-recorders are used to a wider extent in the home, they have proved efficient babysitters, and children's programmes and entertainment will in all certainty be a major article on the videogram market. A new sales market would open for the television companies if they were permitted to produce videograms, and this would give them a new, and longed-for source of income.

But also the nationally owned television corporations would be forced to steer their production according to commercial judgments. It is not difficult to see what consequences an uncontrolled video market would have as far as the children are concerned: increased viewing of programmes of less good quality.

Text television and cable television

Further fields of application for the television set are being tested. With fairly simple (but still expensive) accessories, it is possible, for example, to receive printed texts on the screen, which can provide information in a whole lot of fields via a sort of "television newspaper".

Also, experiments with cable television have been made in a number of fields. In Japan, for example, it is planned to use cable television to render daily life less laborious. People will be able to call a doctor, order goods, get a newspaper sent home, or learn, for example, mathematics or languages via television. There is also a concern to break people's growing isolation by offering, electronically, a wide selection of information, with in addition a possibility of two-way communication. In the USA, successful attempts have been made to activate pensioners, by letting them make their own cable television broadcasts. The disturbing aspect of such a development is that the television medium will at the same time be used as a substitute for direct human contact.

Conclusions and proposals

As we have seen, television is the most important of all mass media for children. They use no other medium as regularly, or as much. Adults devote about half their free time to television viewing. Children of school age watch more than adults, and they watch mainly adult programmes, choosing above all entertainment programmes, feature films, series, thrillers and similar.

What, then, does television give them in exchange? Television has great opportunities when it comes to providing knowledge and emotional experience, creating involvement and a concern for others, and activating people in various ways. Children get many such impressions from television. But television can also increase the knowledge gaps, promote aggressiveness and indifference, and give a distorted picture of the adult world. Too much watching and excessive dependence on television lead to passivity and isolation. (We shall consider how children are influenced by television in the next chapter.)

Many people believe that extensive television viewing during the school years is of no importance. The dependence on television ceases, it is said, as the children come up into their teens and acquire other interests. But even if viewing falls off (there are, however, many teenagers who watch a great deal of television) the influences of dependence on television can make themselves felt later on. Also, the television programmes in themselves will have had many undesired effects. This is due not only to the children's one-sided choice of programmes, but also to the uniform nature of much of the supply. (See the chapter on "Purchases of foreign television programmes".)

The starting-point for changes concerning the ether media should therefore be that any change should as far as possible increase the positive benefit of television and reduce the negative effects for all groups of viewers.

Will television transmissions during the day, as proposed by the Broadcasting Commission, and the new media we have discussed - satellite television, videograms, cable and text television - improve the present situation?

Development in the ether media has so far tended towards a total increase in transmission time, and increased freedom of choice thanks to more channels.

Parallel with the concern for increased freedom of choice, there is a desire to improve the quality of programmes and discharge the Corporation's responsibility to the audience. In the terms of the Broadcasting Commission's report, it is the Corporation's responsibility, among other things, to "stimulate and activate" viewers and listeners more than previously, to "pay increased attention to the interests of various disadvantaged groups" and to "give and communicate valuable knowledge and impulses from different countries and environments, and to combat the risks of levelling-down and a one-sided cultural influence".

In the concept of quality, the Broadcasting Commission includes the availability of programmes to viewers. Daytime transmissions are regarded as being a valuable contribution for those groups, for example, with irregular and inconvenient working hours.

But when it comes to availability, research data indicate that the usefulness of daytime transmissions for these groups has been overestimated.

Instead of by the target groups envisaged, it emerges that daytime transmissions are mainly utilised by children, students, those working at home, and pensioners.

For people with inconvenient working hours, the most important thing is an increase in the number of repeats in the evenings. Generally speaking, evening repeats would give better services for all groups, not just those with irregular working hours. However, those with regular evening work (approximately 5,000) and possibly those with regular night work (approximately 18,000) could be better served by daytime television than more programmes in the evenings.

For the old, the sick, and others in various institutions where it is difficult to watch evening programmes, daytime transmissions could also fill an important need. For these groups, however, it should be possible to exploit the technical advances being made in television, such as videograms and internal television. Inadequate financial resources are usually quoted as an obstacle in this context. In our opinion, however, it should be possible to finance an important investment like this by redistributing funds (for example from the satellite project).

The Broadcasting Commission does not consider it a desirable objective to increase the amount of time devoted to radio and the television by the individual. It observes that this is already considerable, and that many people regard radio and television as an obstacle to other activities, and to social intercourse.

In its analyses, the Commission finds that changes in the media sector in the past ten years have produced only fairly slow changes in people's media habits, and it believes that a slow course of development is to be expected also in the coming ten years. We mean that in this respect the Commission has paid too little attention to the studies made of the audience's habits. It has based its judgments on the average figures for the adult population. If, however, one studies the habits of children, one arrives, as we have shown, at entirely different results. Children of all ages doubled their television viewing following the introduction of a second channel.

So far as the children are concerned, the proposals regarding, for example, a total exchange of programmes in the Nordic countries, increased transmission times with attractive programmes during the day, and the expansion of videogram activities, would mean both an increased consumption of television, and a further emphasis on entertainment programmes.

The Commission writes: "We are naturally aware that efforts on behalf of disadvantaged groups (daytime transmissions) will also be available to others, and that this can lead, for example, to persons who are already high-level consumers of radio and television further increasing their consumption. It is important, however, for the broadcasting service to try to increase the freedom of choice of different categories of the audience, and the benefit they obtain from individual programmes."

It is possible that the Commission, in its phrase "persons who are already high-level consumers", had children in mind. In which case we consider its argument cynical and short-sighted. The Commission's declarations about freedom of choice, availability, quality of programmes, and responsibility to the public will be converted, in the case of children, into increased dependence, uniformity, and lack of freedom. Children comprise over one fifth of the population, and will soon themselves constitute the adult audience.

We therefore oppose increased transmission times in television now or via satellite, particularly during the day. The proposed increase in resources, which is nowhere near sufficient for all the requirements and wishes expressed, should be devoted to an improvement in the quality of programmes within the existing or reduced transmission times.

Daytime television would also run counter to the objective laid down by the latest government commission on education, namely to give children a more active leisure under the auspices of the school. One might be forced, owing to the inadequate resources proposed for this purpose, to use such television programmes to keep pupils occupied.

Any daytime transmissions during the mornings or early afternoons (when they would not be seen by schoolchildren) would even so mean that the preschool children saw more adult programmes than they do now.

We further consider that the videogram market should be controlled, so that it does not become possible to exploit the dependence of either children or adults on television.

The proposal to reduce transmission times instead of increase them, and to send more repeats, is regarded by many as puritanical, and an attempt to curb a necessary development. But the development in question is not necessary. The question is how it can be steered.

An evening entirely without television and/or an evening with only repeats, for example, could surely be seen as a realistic alternative in the future planning of activities. Particularly in view of the lack of good quality foreign programmes.

We also consider that freedom of choice has more to do with quality than quantity, and that the freedom of choice now being discussed is far too often between fairly similar programmes. The choice must also be between television and alternative activities. The arguments concerning freedom of choice that are now presented often seem to assume that people need to watch television every day, or almost every day. But the situation of choice can also be extended over time, and over other media and activities.

Most people have no freedom of choice in their lives, in the sense of being able to influence their own situation in any decisive way. To activate via radio and television does not imply compensating for this, but means giving viewers and listeners impulses and opportunities themselves to be active and creative.

And certainly more dramatised programmes, as proposed by the Broadcasting Commission, could provide ideas and experiences leading to real involvement!

In order to give adults the opportunity to see children's programmes, just as well as children watch adult programmes, and in such a way that children and adults get something out of them together, more programmes for children of school age should also be sent at a good viewing hour early in the evening.

It would be desirable if many of the programmes seen by children could be discussed afterwards, so as to combat the negative impressions - or, indeed, reinforce the positive. As it is, programmes follow so quickly upon each other that there is seldom time. Longer intervals between programmes would thus be a valuable innovation, and not only for children.

In our view, other media than the visual media are of importance for the development of the child.

The Broadcasting Commission considers it proper that children's programmes on television should be protected from competition by other programmes. We agree, but would add a recommendation that radio programmes for children also should be protected in the same way. If they cannot be fully protected, they can at least be assigned to the "parents' channel".

The question here is not of increasing radio listening, but of changing its structure, and giving children's programmes on the radio the same chance as children's programmes on television. Television viewing, "Radio Melody", parental lack of knowledge and disinterest, and probably also the consumption of records and cassettes, have led to a greatly reduced radio audience for children's programmes. The introduction of another radio channel (the proposed P 4), and, not least, daytime television, can mean still further competition.

How Children Are Influenced by Television

In the general debate, people sometimes ask whether children are influenced by television, which is an unreasonable question. Throughout our lives we receive new impressions and acquire new experiences from the people and events we encounter. We ourselves also influence those around us. Naturally we also receive impressions from television. It would be strange otherwise. Indeed it would be regrettable - because in that case why should we have television at all?

The question is thus not whether children are influenced by television, but how they are influenced and to what extent - compared with the influence from parents, peers, the school, other mass media, etc.

Influences in general

The question usually posed regarding the influence of the mass media on children - and that in which most research money has been invested, internationally speaking - is how children and young people are affected by violence in television, movies, comic magazines, books, etc. We will be summarising the research on violence-as-entertainment in a separate section at the end of this chapter.

But the question of violence-as-entertainment has attracted such major interest in the debate that we tend to forget the other influences of the mass media. Are they, perhaps, equally important? We have, admittedly, but an imperfect picture of the effects of the media. But if we summarise the Nordic research into children and the mass media, we find at least some pieces of the puzzle. So let us for a moment ignore the elements of violence, and consider the role of television in other respects.

It is important to underline that adults, too, are continuously influenced by television - as they are by the radio, newspapers, their families, their work, etc. But, on the whole, children are more impressionable. First, they have less experience with which to compare. Second, they comprehend things differently precisely because they are children and in process of development. It is usually reckoned that it is not until the age of 12 that children are capable of abstract thought and adult logic, and thus have acquired the same "distance" to reality.

The research results on the general influence of the mass media on children relate, as in the case of violence, mainly to television. This is hardly surprising, since television, as we have seen, is the mass medium most used by children. It is also the medium that children themselves think has most to give them. And television is easily available, in that it is present in the home and has both picture and sound.

In combination, these latter properties make television unique. Particularly the younger children are entirely dependent on picture and sound, since they cannot read. And the picture is most like reality. Both children and adults have great trust in television. But children are less aware that there is a communicator and a purpose behind the picture. If 11-year-olds learn of the same news event from television, their parents, their teachers, and the newspapers, the majority of the children will rely primarily on television. Because television is considered best informed, and "you can see for yourself what is happening".

A whole number of questions as to the effects of television relate primarily to these aspects: on the properties of the television medium and the actual act of viewing (as opposed to the content of television). Nor is availability the only consideration, i.e. the picture and the sound, and the fact that the set is in the home. Other aspects considered have been the applications of television as a technical apparatus. Or of the fact that it is impossible to stop a television transmission and go back in the narrative (as one can in a book, a newspaper, or a record). Or that televsion viewing is essentially a one-way communication, rather than a mutual exchange between people.

What are the influences of the picture?

Does, for example, the constant watching of pictures reduce children's fantasy and visual creativity, so that they can no longer shape their own pictures but become dependent on readymade patterns and games? And does their growing consumption of visual images impair their verbal capacity? (Maybe radio plays the reverse role in this respect?)

Nordic research affords almost no answers to these questions. One study shows that in the brief period of two-three years, television leads to no radical changes in linguistic ability, either negative or positive. On the other hand, school-children have got impressions from television in their vocabulary in a more superficial way, in that they have learnt the meaning of various difficult, foreign, technical and commercial words that are used particularly on television.

Another study, also covering a couple of years, suggests that the drawings of 7-year-olds are inspired by television, in that they contain more activities and objects of fantasy, more movement, perspective and relevant details than previously. In the course of time, however, the influence of the school seems to get the upper hand.

It may also be in place to point out that familiarity with television gives a certain understanding of cinematic language (e.g. shifts in perspective, and cross-cuts in time and space). It must be noted, however, that all this is a question of degree. The decisive factors are the way children think and their capabilities and circumstances in general.

But what the frequent looking at pictures entails over a longer period of time we just do not know.

Does television activate or passivate?

One very common type of fear is existential in nature. Does television, for example, make us observers rather than participants? Does it create an illusion of having been somewhere, and done and seen something, when one has in reality been sitting at home? And does this in its turn further a tendency to escape from the questions one has to deal with in real life?

One can couple these questions with certain others, which are perhaps more concrete. What activities, for example, has viewing replaced? There are only a certain number of hours in the day, and people must have done something before television. "I suppose they read the Bible, and went to bed early", guessed one 9-year-old. Has television claimed time from any constructive occupations? And has television, as a substitute for people's growing isolation in the society, given us mock-relationships with television personalities?

The questions are many and provide food for thought, but actual facts and figures are scarce. They do, however, support the following answer:

Television has acquired a central place in our everyday lives. When and how people watch is determined primarily by their daily rhythm, their necessary activities, and their more organised leisure activities. But television has not only encroached between these, but has also displaced certain activities. Children, both the youngest ones and the older, go to bed later than previously. The leisure activities that have been affected include certain mass media activities: above all, cinemagoing has declined, and radio listening has become more geared to music, and more a secondary activity. Also, the so-called "marginal" or "non-organised" leisure activities claim less time than previously (the kind of activities that are difficult to pin down in a questionnaire?)

What, then, does television viewing give people in exchange? To summarise the views of Swedish children themselves, the majority say as follows: "The programmes are fun and exciting" - television provides entertainment. "You lern a lot" - television provides information. "You get involved with and get to know various people on the screen" - television in itself is a social contact. And "you get subjects for conversation" - television improves one's social contacts in reality.

That television provides stimulation and subjects for discussion sounds positive enough. That television itself constitutes a social contact can be a great asset if you are alone or ill.

But the role of television is an equivocal one. To begin with: once television is there, viewing rapidly becomes a habit, a quite strong dependency, as most children confirm (or in the case of the youngest, their parents). It can be difficult, if not almost impossible, to break the habit and do something else instead. Or settle to something else if the set breaks down.

Secondly, the act of watching television seems to reinforce the passivity and isolation of certain groups of children and adults: there is a risk of people growing apart as the result of much viewing. The least interested and most insecure parents simply let television take over. And their own interest is often concentrated more on the television than on their children.

Thirdly, it is not enough simply to establish that television provides entertainment and information, and is a means and an end for social contact. One must also ask what actual impulses and subjects for conversation the company of the television provides. Thus, how activating are the actual programmes?

Which brings us to the effects of the television content.

How do television programmes influence activities and actions?

Those who watch television together with a child or children of preschool age soon tend to speak about the strong effects exercised by programmes. The child expresses many of its reactions in body-language and commentaries, and does or says often something straight afterwards that relates to the programme. Teachers in preschools and basic schools also sometimes trace the previous day's television programmes in the games the children play.

There is no doubt that television programmes often activate particularly the younger children in this way. Many 3-6-year-olds, for example, have begun to count aloud after "Five ants are more than four elephants".* Many children have also played at being "cops", started fighting, or acted tough after watching entertainment programmes for adults. If such activities occur after an individual programme, it is usually on the same or the following day. In the case, however, of a popular series, one can notice an enhanced or longer-term inspiration.

But one must remember that small children more often express themselves with their bodies, imitate, and are active precisely in order to learn how to behave. This is far from indicating that they have actually internalized the knowledge, emotions, norms and values which led to the act in question.

In spite of everything, the activities noticeable among children after television viewing are thus mostly short-term impulses of quite little significance. They are also observable more and more seldom with age. The mass media seldom lead to actions directly or only by themselves. Instead, we get a lot of impressions that are mixed with other impressions. And it is mainly in this indirect way that television programmes can be activating or passivating, enhancing or reducing people's readiness to act in a given way.

To talk about programmes can be regarded as an exception - this is a fairly common action also among older children and adults. But it is not a question of intensive debates following each programme. Children's programmes are discussed fairly little, either at home or at school and preschool. In school hours, discussion is usually restricted to the specific school-TV programmes. Children of school age seem to talk to each other mostly about the entertainment programmes they have seen the previous evening. We do not, unfortunately, know whether they discuss them to any larger extent with their parents.

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* For this series, see p 20 and 106.

How do television programmes influence knowledge and conceptions of reality?

Children acquire a large volume of knowledge from television, from both children's and adult programmes. It is rare, of course, for any individual programme to exercise a long-term influence among the majority of children. But the information can be easier to remember if the programmes are in a series, or if facts are repeated in other ways.

Children, like adults, primarily learn matters relating to their own experience and situation, while it is more difficult to master anything entirely unfamiliar. As a very general rule of thumb, one can also say that children learn more easily when they are emotionally involved, for example when they find the programme amusing or can identify.

The experience and situation of children alter both with age and with their environment. Children with different social backgrounds, for example, therefore acquire different sorts of knowledge from television.

This also means that the children with most experience, those who already know more, seem to learn more from the programmes. This is valid for at least that knowledge which the programmes intend to impart. There is thus a great risk of television contributing to widen the knowledge gaps that exist between children in different emotional and social circumstances.

Even if different children learn different things from television, and acquire different amounts of knowledge, there are still certain areas which practically all children in the long term have become acquainted with via television. Children of school age, for example, have learnt about other countries, and contemporary political personalities. Television has also provided concepts of war and peace. In actual fact, the influence of television - and other mass media - seems to increase with the "remoteness" of the subject. Or conversely, the less influence is exercised by the family, the peer group, and the school. In other words, children perhaps in the long run acquire most information from television about the world they do not themselves encounter in practice. And since this world also to a large extent lies outside the experience of the family, the peer group and the school, social background seems to some extent to have been put out of court.

It is important to emphasise that the knowledge children acquire from television does not simply consist of news or learning in the traditional sense. Practically all children have also acquired, in a similar way, second-hand information of this kind about different human roles, and life outside the home and the school. Children want to learn from television, but preferably in an entertaining way. In view of the programmes they select, we can draw the conclusion that, so far as television is concerned, children orient themselves in the adult world mainly via entertainment programmes.

Does television, then, promote a fragmentary or coherent comprehension of facts?

What is shown on television comprises a limited sample of all available facts. The world commented upon in the news programmes, for example, has quite a few "white" or "unexplored" areas. Apart from reflecting the culture of society, television thus helps to define reality in a limited way. This construction of reality forms, as we have seen, a frame of reference for children and adults when they describe and explain certain events.

Many have drawn attention to the risks of the excessive flow of information and the peacemeal portrayal of reality by the mass media in our variegated society. The amount and the disconnected fragments can cause blockages, providing knowledge without awareness. As a result,the information cannot be used to solve conflicts and problems, but perhaps creates them instead. Nor does one become more or better informed simply because the flow is increasing.

Several studies with adults show that news and other informative programmes on television and radio often give an incoherent picture of reality, and that they are difficult to follow, particularly for people with little education. It is thus at least as important to try to convey a knowledge of relationships as a knowledge of disparate facts. Facts must be explained. They must be related to their causes and consequences as events in a process. They must be linked to the viewer's or listener's situation, and they should point the way to alternative courses of action. Some people mean that this will never be possible, since producers are recruited from narrow sectors of the society. Others are more optimistic, and have suggested measures to make programmes more comprehensible and increase the participation of the audience in programme activities.

But entertainment programmes, too, tell about facts. We shall discuss in the chapter "Purchases of foreign television programmes" the biassed and one-sided picture of, for example, men and women, and minority groups, given by the foreign entertainment programmes. Children are major consumers of entertainment programmes. They learn about people and societies from these programmes. Time and again they encounter similar, stereotyped, and false pictures. As we shall see later on, a high-level consumption of violence-as-entertainment can lead to false conceptions of violence in reality. When it comes to these programmes, the output is not fragmented, but builds up a distorted whole!

Application of the principles of balance and impartiality, and of extensive freedom of speech and information, has contributed in news programmes and information programmes in the strict sense to a fragmentary and incomprehensible presentation. In the entertainment programmes, which give children still more - but biassed - information, these principles are hardly applied at all!

How do television programmes influence norms and values?

Children also acquire various norms and values from television. Here, again, the individual programme is seldom decisive. But series of programmes, or norms and values that recur over a longer period, can prove of greater significance.

What norms and values children acquire will depend, among other things, on their emotional involvement, on whether the programme is fun or exciting, or whether they can identify with it. It will also depend on the viewer's own experience and situation.

And this in its turn means that those who most easily absorb norms and values from television are the children who are insecure and isolated, and thus have not adopted, via their parents and others, a position on the issues involved. A sound and stable relationship with one's surroundings, and opportunities to discuss one's experiences of a programme, can be of the greatest importance also when it comes to processing and combating fear and aggression. It is thus conceivable that television contributes to increase "aggression gaps" and certain "value gaps" etc., in addition to the knowledge gaps.

But even if different children acquire different norms and values from television, there are certain norms and values that very large groups of children acquire via television. This appears to be because they relate to precisely such fields of fact or knowledge of which most children have had fairly little direct experience - the same also being true of their families, the peer group, and the school. Let us give examples from two groups of studies.

The first relates to a number of children's programmes, for and about deaf and hard-of-hearing children. People often mention the risks involved in the mass media treating specific groups in society as "problems". The reverse, however, can also apply. When these programmes were broadcast, children with normal hearing acquired a keen interest in deaf and hard-of-hearing children, and a greater understanding of them, and they found it exciting to try to express themselves in the deaf children's "secret" sign language. The self-confidence of the deaf and hard-of-hearing children increased noticeably, in that they received appreciative attention from other children, saw others in the same situation as their own, and suddenly could understand the programmes better.

The other example shows that television, over the long term, has given practically all schoolchildren impulses to desire a more active, mobile and urban lifestyle. There is, among other things, a greater desire to move, particularly to the towns. Expectations with regard to future occupations have become higher, and partly different in character. Children dream, for example, more often of such glamourous occupations as becoming footballers, pilots, pop singers and film-stars, at the expense of such occupations as those of teacher, craftsman, or shop assistant. Another attitude which has spread is that fashion and appearance are important.

In view of the children's choice of programmes, the conclusion, once again, is that this influence stems primarily from entertainment programmes.

In addition there are the norms and values presented in connection with violence-as-entertainment (see the second part of this chapter) - that money, possessions and individual success (among other things) are important.

Television has not only reflected but also contributed to the acceleration of the development towards today's consuming and competing society.

How do television programmes influence emotions?

Television also affects children's emotions. The most common thing is for children to get positive experiences - otherwise they would not watch. Almost every child between the ages of 3 and 15 says they watch television because the programmes are fun and exciting.

Sometimes, children also have unpleasant or negative experiences of television. They can be frightened by more realistic programmes, as well as by, say, violence-as-entertainment. Other feelings (or lack of feelings) to which violence-as-entertainment contributes are aggressiveness and indifference.

But is it necessarily only the violence which gives impulses to aggressiveness and indifference? What role do the norms and values of entertainment programmes in general play?

Increased consumption means not being satisfied with what you have got; instead, your expectations constantly rise, as the result of an habituation effect. Since television has contributed to greater expectations of a "modern" and consuming life-style, television itself has probably also had such effects of habituation to existing circumstances.

Children watch television because they want a social contact, and because they wish to improve their real social contacts: they want security, companionship, status, and self-condidence. But, as a consequence,this is not how television will work in the longer run. For constantly rising expectations and habituation to what one has got, do not lead to greater security and self-confidence, but to constant dissatisfaction and a feeling of boredom. If television promotes this sort of frustration with everyday life, and does not at the same time offer ideas as to how one can improve or lighten one's situation, then this will mean still more aggressiveness and indifference.

How great is the influence of television?

How great, then, is the influence of television - compared with that of the other mass media, the family, the preschool, the school, friends etc? How are the impressions from television supported or offset by the other impressions children get?

One must not exaggerate the importance of television. The identity of the child, and its conceptions of the world around it, are built up by its own discoveries, and by the upbringing and examples of others. The primary factors in this process are practical experiences, and the people the child encounters.

Television is not reality, but a world of symbols. And it is above all symbols and ideas that children and adults obtain from television, their actual actions being influenced more slowly.

Apart from television there are the other mass media, pictures, sounds, and printed words, acting upon each other. Personal communication often means more than these symbolic worlds, since a parent, for example, or a teacher can start, in a dialogue, from the child's own qualities and needs.

Nor, however, is the role of television negligible. In terms of time, television claims on average one eighth of the waking lives of 9-14-year-olds.

And as we have seen, television can offer the child other examples and models than the family, peer group, and school, and it can repeat them, vary them, and intensify them in a different way. We have mentioned several areas where the long-term influence of television on the children's knowledge, norms and values reigns more or less supreme ; television influences the majority of children's conception of "outside world", i.e. the people, places and events of which they have no personal experience. In the longer perspective, this seems to imply that children are socialised by the family, the peer group, the school and the mass media in partly disparate areas.

Also, the role played by television is greater for some children than others, depending for example on their social group, living habits, and interests. 25 % of 9-14-year-olds, for example, watch television for one fifth of their waking time. And 8 % 9-14-year-olds devote one third of their waking time to television.

Many children do not have satisfactory personal communications. They experience problems in their contacts with the family, their peers, and the school. As we have mentioned, it is also these children who most easily take impressions in their norms and values from television.

At least with regard to conceptions of the "outside world", and in the case of children with unsatisfactory contacts, television is thus often more influental than personal communications.

Violence-as-entertainment

That impressions obtained from the mass media play a greater or a lesser role depending on one's own experiences and contacts with people, and on what worlds the mass media are presenting, is a circumstance that naturally applies also to mass media violence. So much research and debate has been concentrated on the question of how children and young people are affected by violence in the mass media that we tend to neglect to put that violence in its greater context. Far too often, violence on television is seen as an isolated phenomenon. Far too often, television is made the scapegoat for the increasing violence in the society. It is important to remember that other factors in our surroundings, and in the structure of our society, are decisive in causing acts of violence, aggression, and indifference. But this does not mean that violence in the mass media is totally unimportant. We continuously receive impulses from the phenomena we encounter. Why should we be exempt from impressions just from mass media violence?

While research on, above all, violence-as-entertainment has steadily increased in quantity, the debate on the subject has ebbed and flowed ever since the Thirties. In recent years, the tide of this debate has risen again. Also, actions against violence-as-entertainment have been organised in several countries. In Sweden, for example, the Swedish Save the Children Fund and others have run two campaigns. The most intensive actions have been organised by parent associations, groups concerned with children and television, and other civic organisations in the USA. Recently, for example, such groups have threatened to boycott the goods advertised in particularly violent programmes. Both researchers and the organisations themselves record items of violence on television, and regularly publish lists of programmes with their violence ratings.

It is not possible, as yet, to trace any clear results of the debate, and these actions. An argument that is still common among decision-makers in the mass media, and politicians, is that the research results are contradictory.

The research, however, are not especially contradictory any longer. They have been, but that is another matter. And one of the reasons for the intensified debate, and the actions, is that the researchers are now largely in agreement.

Summary of international research

Research on violence-as-entertainment has been performed mainly in the USA, where it has related primarily to the short-term effects of television on children and young people. There are, however, also studies from other countries (including around twenty from Scandinavia), on other media, on long-term effects, and on adults. And there is nothing to say that the research results do not apply, at least in their essentials, also to them.

The question on which researchers have previously been divided is whether violence-as-entertainment leads to or alleviates aggression. In principle, the one school has said that the individual becomes less aggressive after having seen, heard, or read about elements of violence in the mass media (the catharsis theory). The other school has maintained, on the contrary, that the individual becomes more aggressive after such elements of violence (the aggression, stimulation, or triggering theory).

In 1969, however, the third major federal commission of enquiry since World War II into the effects of violence was set up. A million dollars were spent partly on twentyfive or so new investigations, partly on a summary of the many hundreds of studies already made. A committee of twelve established researchers in the field made the summary. In January 1972 they published their conclusion, which was that research confirms the aggression theory.

In the years following the commission's report, the absolute majority of other researchers, and more recent summaries, have supported its conclusion. 1) Experiments which previously supported the catharsis theory have been repeated, but have not given the same results. One has then pointed at the possibility that the catharsis effect may be simultaneously present, even if it is too weak to offset the aggression effect. On the contrary, it may, for example as a more temporary repression of the aggression, prepare the way for the increased aggression effect.*

The argument concerning catharsis contra aggression is thus past history. However, the aggression

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1) Among a large number of publications during the Seventies, we know of only two that reject or question the aggression effect. The same publications, however, do consider it possible that violence in the mass media can lead to other effects, such as indifference and fear (see further in the text).

* Another assumption, not yet confirmed, is that catharsis could occur with a small group of particularly imaginative individuals. Thanks to their imaginative capacity, they could process impressions of violence received from the media and move forward from these experiences. This theory is interesting since it would mean that such violence in the mass media as is consciously designed to stimulate the recipient's imagination, for example by its being put in a real context as sometimes occurs with artistically well-motivated elements of violence, could exercise certain positive influences in the original, Aristotelian sense. This, however, hardly applies to the speculative clichés of violence-as-entertainment, which, on the contrary, by its stereotyped nature probably actually hinders the recipient from working upon his experiences.

results do not imply that violence-as-entertainment has any direct effect on the frequency of crime in society. Nor do they mean that the mass media lead directly to other violence actions, if by actions we mean the final links in chains of acquired knowledge, norms, values and emotions. As we have said, it is fairly uncommon for the mass media to exercise such an effect directly or only by themselves. Younger children in particular, however, can imitate aggressive behaviour from television programmes, films, comics etc. (Concerning the often exaggerated importance of children's imitation of the mass media, see p 46.

But above all the results of research into aggression mean that violence-as-entertainment contributes to aggressive emotions, which in their turn can have effects on behaviour. Violence in the mass media, like other mass media influences, thus works for the most part indirectly, i.e. by influencing our knowledge, norms, values, and emotions. And before impulses from the media reach the stage of action, they have been into the melting pot with all the other impulses we have received and continue to receive from different quarters.

It has been demonstrated that the amount of violence presented in the mass media is of significance for the aggression of the viewer, the listener, and the reader. The type of violence, however, also plays a role: violence that is presented as justified (i.e. the violence is exercised by the hero, the sympathetic person) leads to aggression more frequently than violence that is presented as unjustified. In a similar manner, violence without explicit consequences or with positive consequences leads to aggression more easily than violence that is shown to have negative consequences. Some studies have also indicated that verbal violence as well as physical violence, and animated films as well as films with real people, can contribute to increased aggression.

In the case of children, research shows that children who are insecure, isolated or aggressive even before they watch more easily become aggressive afterwards. The same holds if the parents are positive to violence-as-entertainment, and if they do not talk to the child about the violence and then expressly reject it.

Primarily after the above-mentioned agreement regarding the results on aggression, - a "milestone" in the history of research into mass media violence - the perspective of researchers has widened. Does, for example, violence-as-entertainment also contribute to other feelings?

Ten or so specific studies, in combination with general psychological theory and practice, support the assumption that consumption of the mass media leads in all of us to a slow habituation to violence, i.e. that our reactions to violence are being increasingly blunted, and that we tolerate violence more and more as an adequate means of resolving conflicts. The question here is thus rather one of an absence of feeling, an indifference, which makes us feel less and less disgust with the person exercising the violence, and less and less pity for the person subjected to it.

A third feeling promoted by violence-as-entertainment is that of fear, primarily in the case of young children. Many adults believe that the fear effect is the "biggest", in that is more easily noticeable than, say, indifference and aggression. It should be observed, however, that children also can be frightened by, for example, children's programmes and adult documentaries. A common cause of fear is in fact recognition, that the programme is realistic.

Apart from various feelings, violence-as-entertainment cultivates our knowledge and conceptions of reality. One series of studies demonstrates, for example, that high-level consumers of prime-time drama programmes on American television, eighty per cent of which contain violence*, overrate the possibilities of being involved in violence themselves. This applies to both children and adults. Violence-as-entertainment can thus, via an increased sense of risk and uncertainty among broad sectors of the population, lead to louder calls for law and order and an increased dependence upon authorities.

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* 1977 the corresponding figure was 75,5 %.

Violence-as-entertainment also influences our norms and values. We know from content analyses of television programmes, films, comics and literature that a great deal of entertainment affords a stereotyped picture of humanity with regard, for example, to occupational roles, the sex-roles, and minority groups. Entertainment violence, however, also contains other norms and values that are not so easy to pin down.

A scrutiny of violence-as-entertainment on Swedish television in the spring of 1976 revealed that the violence in our Friday and Saturday thrillers is consistently exercised between two, or a few, individuals, and that the motives for murder are almost always to obtain money or acquire private property. An analysis of American television programmes has reached the same results. Violence-as-entertainment in Sweden is also comprised mainly of American and English imports. Violence need not, however, be presented in this way. In Soviet drama programmes, for example, which also contain violence, the violence is usually exercised collectively and in order to support or combat a society. Violence is thus produced and presented in different cultural contexts. One of its purposes is to reinforce the norms and values of the society in question.

Even violence-as-entertainment thus supports the norms and value judgments, widespread in our society, that it is important to own and consume, and that success should be achieved by competition and individual effort. And moreover: if you have no other ways of obtaining money, possessions and success - if, for example, you are isolated, have no real function in the society, and have no real opportunities to influence your situation - then there is still other ways: you can use violence. It is hardly surprising that violence-as-entertainment should be so popular, and so exciting.

The perspective of those performing research on violence has altered also in other ways. One has studied, for example, violence in the news and obtained much the same results as with fictional violence: viewers who experienced the violence in a news programme about South Vietnam as justified, themselves became more aggressive; viewers of the same news programme, when the violence was presented as unjustified, did not.

And the concept of violence is being broadened to include, for example, oppression in general and structural violence - that violence of which no individual person can be accused.

And more and more studies are starting from data that do not directly relate to the mass media, namely from the social conditions of which violence-as-entertainment is a symptom. For the mass media, after all, play in spite of everything only a contributory role, and are almost never the decisive, original cause.

But this does not mean that the researchers have abandoned or quarrel about the results so far reached, namely that violence-as-entertainment in the mass media - in different ways and in different persons - contributes to imitation, aggressive feelings, indifference and fear, to unrealistic conceptions of reality, and influenced norms and values. On the contrary, these results have led more and more research workers to protest against violence-as-entertainment.

Can violence-as-entertainment be defended?

As shown by the summary of international research, the argument that the research results are contradictory no longer holds. Nor is it possible, owing to the results obtained, to justify violence-as-entertainment by the catharsis theory, or statements to the effect that the crimes presented anyhow do not pay. Why, then, are still no clear changes noticeable in the supply from the mass media?

In defence of or as excuses for violence-as-entertainment various other arguments are adduced by radio and television corporations, film distributors, the publishers of comics and books, politicians etc. We will try to reproduce these arguments, and at the same time try to refute them.

One argument used in the Scandinavian countries is that the research has been performed mainly in other countries, and is therefore invalid here. - This reason will hardly stand up, partly because we import violence-as-entertainment from the countries where the most research has been performed, partly because the Scandinavian results agree with the international - and they have also been included in our previous summary of the research. Nor have the Scandinavian researchers concerned with violence-as-entertainment themselves expressed any doubt as to the applicability of the international results in Scandinavia.

Another argument, also relating to the Scandinavian countries, is that violence-as-entertainment. particularly on television, is on a modest scale here, by comparison with the supply in, say, the USA and the United Kingdom.* - This observation is naturally true as to facts, but it is still no argument. The effects are there, even if they are less pronounced. Also, one must judge the mass media supply as a whole, and many have borne witness to the increase in violence-as-entertainment in the movies, in the comics and weekly magazines, in the fruit-stall literature, and as an accessory to pop music. There has also been an increase in Swedish television: I.e. in 1972/73, immediately after the two-channel system was introduced, the number of thrillers and westerns was less than in 1967/68, when there was only one channel. In their programme policy guidelines the two newly created channels adopted a restrictive attitude to violence-as-entertainment. Gradually, however, the number of such programmes has increased again, and the channels now broadcast them under permanent titles. And even if Swedish television violence is on average less "hard" than in many other countries, such series have also been broadcast which are high on the American violence ratings (such as Kojak, Baretta, and Rockford).

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* No content analyses indicating the volume of television violence in the Nordic countries are yet available. In international travel reports and similar surveys, however, the judgment is commonly made that the Scandinavian countries, particularly perhaps Sweden and Norway, have the least television violence in the world.

A third argument against doing anything about violence-as-entertainment, and one that is quoted both here and in other Western countries, is that freedom of speech and information must not be violated. The control of violence-as-entertainment would be a breach of the democratic rights, i.e. censorship or even dictatorship. - Studies have shown, however, that the balance in the flow of information between different parts of the world is very distorted. The USA, for example, imports 2 % of its television entertainment programmes. If, on the other hand, one illustrates the exports by the USA graphically, they emerge like a giant octopus embracing the earth. At the same time production for the mass media is characterised by an increasing concentration of ownership. It is the large and the multinational corporations that have the resources to offer a large volume of material, and cheap material, on the market. Often it is not even the mass media corporations themselves that pay for the productions, but other corporations which are concerned to advertise goods. Also the television programmes, the films, the comic series etc. become goods. Whose freedom is it then that we are defending? That of American Motors, Chevrolet, and General Foods. (These corporations were among the ten sponsoring the programmes containing the most violence in American television during 1976.) To do something about violence-as-entertainment is thus not a question of greater, but of less, control. That it is the few and not the majority who make themselves heard is a problem to which much attention is being paid internationally. Many countries have protested against "the free flow of information", and the alternative concept of "the right to communicate" proposed in UNESCO has therefore excited great interest.

A fourth argument, bound up with the preceding, is that the supply in the mass media should be variegated, and offer the audience freedom of choice. - Against the background of what have been said above, and knowing the limited nature of our own imports, this argument falls apart. Measures should instead be taken to combat the present one-sidedness and increase our freedom of choice.

A fifth argument, and one that applies mainly to small countries like Sweden, is the difficulty of the purchasing situation. For example, the lack of programmes from other than the major television countries is a dominant factor, as is the lack of good alternative programmes. Moreover, the situation has deteriorated: the big television corporations in Europe and the USA are also in economic difficulties, and there is therefore reason to fear that they will to a still greater extent than at present produce as inexpensive programmes as possible, at the same time as the latter shall function increasingly as least common denominators for the broad audience. In addition, prices on the international television market have risen in recent years. - Even if these circumstances are true, they must not constitute an argument. If it is impossible to buy good alternatives to violence-as-entertainment, then one should reduce purchases and instead provide better resources for domestic production. If there are no funds for this, then transmission times should be cut. One can also, to a far greater extent than at present, send repeats of good programmes. (See further the chapter "Purchases of foreign television programmes".)

A sixth objection to the combating of violence-as-entertainment, and one used in many countries, is that such violence is exciting and popular - people are getting what they want. - Violence-as-entertainment is indeed popular, but in view of what has been said above about the market forces it is cynical not to add that one is also broadcasting what one wants to broadcast - in order to get maximum audiences and customers. Moreover: the audience can only choose within the framework of what is offered. And moreover: the audience's use of television programmes, films, cartoons etc. is partly the result of a process of habituation. Studies have shown that also the mass media themselves create expectations of violence in the audience. The need for excitement, which is of course fully justified, thus need not necessarily be satisfied by violence-as-entertainment. We need here a thorough analysis of what excitement is, and research into what alternatives that can fulfil this need.

That violence and death - like love - are so often exploited in a stereotyped manner in mass production is naturally due in part to the fact that they are among the things most important to humanity, and thus also exciting. To make exciting programmes, films etc. about other subjects, or about violence, death and love in well-motivated contexts, is a demanding task. It is quite clear, however, that excitement is due to many more components than a handful of subjects. As suggested in the summary of research, the current violence-as-entertainment is exciting also because it legitimizes, indeed actually glorifies, violence as a way of obtaining money, possessions and individual success, i.e. what is in our society identical with power.

A seventh argument is that violence-as-entertainment is harmless - because "it's just entertainment". - As shown by the summary of research, this is a hollow defence indeed: entertainment influences our feelings, norms, and values as well as our knowledge. Information and entertainment are no opposite poles in the same dimension. Rather, entertainment is a form. In other words, every message contains a certain measure of information. This can then be more or less entertaining, depending on the manner in which it is presented. Studies actually suggest that it is precisely from dramatised messages that we most easily get impressions in our norms and values, since we are no longer critical and on our guard.

An eighth objection against doing anything about violence-as-entertainment is that it is the responsibility of the parents to protect their children. - It is, naturally, important that parents, schools, and the children themselves - to a far greater extent than at present - be informed, both in the mass media and in other ways concerning the influences to which we are subjected. But this is not enough. Those particularly exposed include children whose parents are themselves positive towards violence-as-entertainment. Also, as mentioned earlier, it is not only the children, but all of us, who are affected. The mass media, too, must therefore bear their share of the responsibility.

A ninth argument, finally, is that the control of violence-as-entertainment is too complicated, since it is difficult, purely from the standpoint of definition, to formulate such rules. One must not, at the same time, create obstacles to the presentation of real violence, either directly or in a fictional, dramatic form (so-called artistically well-motivated violence). - This argument we cannot regard as other than sheer evasion of the problem. Of course it can be difficult to arrive at a definition, and there will always be borderline cases. But there has been no hesitation about formulating rules about, and defining, many other, still more complicated concepts, such as "impartiality" and "programme quality". A definition should thus at least be attempted.

If the many hundreds of studies on the undesirable consequences of violence-as-entertainment are shrugged off (while an occasional study with the desired result on some other question is accorded great attention and belief), and if the counter-arguments presented by ourselves and others have failed to convince that violence-as-entertainment should be combated, the question is: Why is it so? Are the many defences and excuses put forward for violence-as-entertainment in fact only pretexts? If they are, what are the real reasons? And whose reasons are they?

As we have tried to show, violence-as-entertainment is not presented purely in the audience's interest. At least as important are the great economic interests that steer the supply in the mass media and the other world trade and make the smaller and/or poorer countries dependent on a few rich ones. But the answer to our question must also be that radio and television corporations, film distributors, comics and book publishers even in the smaller and poorer countries disseminate violence-as-entertainment for own reasons of profit.

One should note, finally, the possibility suggested by certain researchers that violence-as-entertainment lies in the interests of the society also in another way: can the industrialised society be so constructed that the effects of violence-as-entertainment are on the whole actually desirable? That, in other words, an increased aggression against single individuals within a minority of the population is the price society accepts for the advantage of louder calls for law and order and an increased dependence upon established authorities among the majority of the population?

Or that the aggression of the minority is the price society accepts in order, at the same time, to be able to passivate the majority and avert their attention from society's true problems?

Or are these just nightmare imaginings?

What can the mass media do?

Violence exists and has existed in the majority of cultures, both in reality, and reproduced or embodied in informative messages and drama. In part, the reproduced and fictionally represented violence reflects the culture, in part, it has a function in the society, for example to reinforce the prevailing norms and values. Entirely to abolish mass media violence is unreasonable, nor would it be desirable. We must, both directly and in a dramatised form, be able to show the real violence, and try to explain the causes of it. Not the least, the mass media themselves should try to analyse the causes of violence-as-entertainment.

On the other hand, neither the research nor the arguments presented afford any support for the transmission of the present type of violence-as-entertainment. Not, as sometimes suggested, because it is meaningless and lacks a context - for, as research has indicated, even violence-as-entertainment has a meaning and a context. But because the audience (and the mass media themselves) should not be one-sidedly dependent on violence-as-entertainment that is produced for commercial mass media systems, or violence-as-entertainment that is (or at least should be) incompatible with our culture and our ideals. Because entertainment violence of this kind has negative effects.

But does not all mass media violence have negative effects? We do not believe this need be the case. The gist of our thinking is as follows:

There are, in the main, four different theories as to what causes aggression. The first is the instinct theory, which states that man is aggressive by nature. The second is psychoanalysis, which regards aggression as a drive, i.e. also as innate. The third is the frustration-aggression hypothesis, which says that man can become aggressive when he is frustrated, i.e. disappointed. The fourth is the social learning theory, which states that man learns aggression in his interplay with the family, the group, and the society because aggression occurs in that culture. Thus, the culture need not relate to the society as a whole. One study, for example, has observed that certain gangs of working-class youth absorb aggression from the mass media more easily than other young people because aggression is something appreciated and useable in the gang.

It is naturally important to know the causes of aggression in order to know how to deal with it. If aggression is innate, it is pointless to try to stifle it: instead, it should be utilised for some constructive purpose. If aggression is due instead to frustration, then one should not try to combat it directly - on the contrary, it can be important, as with the instinct theory and psychoanalysis, that it is allowed to find expression. On the other hand, one should meet the aggression indirectly, by dealing with the causes of the frustration. How large a role, for example, is played by stress, the metropolitan environment, and people's indifference to each other? Or by a social structure based on constantly increased production and consumption, and thus also increased expectations? - If, finally, aggression arises by learning, then we should consider what culture incorporates such models and symbols, and why. The solution in how to deal with the aggression can either be to remove or alter the models. Or to work for altered conditions of life, in the case, for example, of the gang of youths so that aggression appears as less important to it.

The proponents of these different theories have criticised their opponents. But it is also possible to adduce evidence for all four. It is therefore unreasonable to assume that any single one is the answer; all of them can contain a measure of truth.

What, then, the mass media can do is to try to work for that the aggression that already exists, and the aggression that the media themselves - probably inevitably - will contribute to (by sending real violence, and violence in dramatised form) leads towards constructive actions. The person who is aggressive wants, according to the dictionary, to attack. To attack, for example, the anomalies in society can be a constructive act. To attack wildly around you without conscious purpose, or to injure individual persons for money or property, should not, however, according to the prevalent concept of democracy, be constructive acts. The same is true of aggression in the form of individual competition, at least on any major scale.

Another thing the mass media can do is treat the causes of people's frustration and discontent, and to work for improved conditions of life for different groups, and for the population as a whole.

It is difficult, on the other hand, to see increased tolerance or indifference towards violence as a means of solving conflicts as other than a negative influence. What the mass media should do in this respect - apart from avoiding violence-as-entertainment which increases people's indifference to the violence we really want to and must show - is thus to exercise caution with all types of violence.

Just as a certain measure of aggression can be a good thing, one can also imagine a constructive fear, for example the fear that protects us against traffic accidents or causes us to reject various forms of abuse of power. Fear in the form of "desired excitement" can also be something positive. But it is not positive to produce real fright of invented phenomena that do not occur in practice, or strong symptoms of anxiety that lead to mental discomfort and boomerang effects. It is particularly important to remember that fear must be processed if it is not to become greater, preferably by the viewer, the listener and the reader discussing it with others. The mass media themselves can also make a contribution in this respect, for example by showing how fear arises and what one can do about it. In particular, one must be careful not to cause unnecessary fear in children. The fear, like the indifference effect, thus means that the mass media should be restrictive with elements of violence.

Unrealistic and exaggerated conceptions of violence in reality are an undesirable effect, as are norms and values that glorify individualism, competition, the need to own, increased consumption, and violence against individuals. Owing to these effects, the mass media should strive for greater restraint and less one-sidedness with regard to elements of violence than is now the case. Then, such violence as is presented should afford adequate conceptions of reality and reinforce democratic norms and values.

Conclusions and proposals

Violence-as-entertainment in the mass media contributes - in different ways and in different persons - to imitation, aggressive emotions, indifference, and fear, to unrealistic conceptions of reality, and to influenced norms and values. We cannot find any tenable arguments for the communicating of such violence.

Entirely to abolish mass media violence is unreasonable and undesirable. One must be able, both directly and in dramatised form, to show and analyse the real violence.

A common proposal with regard to children and violence-as-entertainment in television, is the introduction of a violence-free television time, for example until 8 or 9 o'clock at night. It is not in our view reasonable, nor in all probability practicable, to assign all elements of violence to a later viewing time. On the other hand, one should send strong scenes of violence, if they are necessary, late in the evening, when there are few preschool children watching. (As we know, the 9-14-year-olds watch television as late as the adult population.)

But to take the late transmission of violence-as-entertainment as any sort of sole solution to the overall problem would be utterly unsatisfactory.

Another common proposal is to reduce the actual volume of violence-as-entertainment. Characteristically, for example, certain members of the Radio Council, in their scrutiny of the television thrillers sent on Fridays and Saturdays, found that the "Kojak" series glorifies coarseness and brutality, because, among other things, situations of violence occurred in these programmes every tenth minute as against every twenty-second minute in the average series of thrillers. Nor do we regard such type of reasoning and proposals as any adequate or final solution to the problem.

The Broadcasting Commission devotes considerable space to mass media violence (partly at the request of the Swedish Save the Children Fund). It also gives a brief account of children's viewing habits, and of the influence of elements of violence.

But what is the result? A "deep understanding" of the demands which were made. A real pat on the head!

The Commission motivates itself as follows: To regulate the question of violence by rules in the Broadcasting Agreement would be "quite complicated". To formulate regulations aimed at the types of violence that should reasonably be eliminated is "difficult". One must, after all, at the same time protect the Corporation's opportunities of presenting violence in reality - in the fictional form of drama (artistically well-motivated violence) or by direct reporting.

The Commission then quotes the stipulations in the Agreement relating to the Corporation's social responsibility, and to the proposed new wording of Article 6 on democracy in the Broadcasting Act ("Programme companies shall assert... the principle of all men's equal value and of the individual's freedom and dignity").

Moreover the Commission believes that the greater resources proposed for the purchase of foreign programmes (among other things, more travel to more countries) should create better opportunities to avoid imported violence-as-entertainment.

But the reasons for our present import are hardly an inactive purchasing policy (see the chapter "Purchases of foreign television programmes").

And Sveriges Radio has for long time been subject to rules relating to social responsibility and to "the maintenance of the basic democratic values". What is the difference? The new Article on democracy is perhaps more exhaustive. But it is not less general and diffuse.

Furthermore, the television channels - and many other radio and television companies - have urged caution with violence-as-entertainment in their own guidelines for programme policy. And although these have been expressed much more clearly, they have proved difficult to live up to.

An article dealing explicitly with violence should therefore be incorporated in the Agreement with the state.

The Broadcasting Commission thus claims that problems of definition has been the decisive consideration in not introducing such an article. Concepts too "roughly hewn", it notes, would only cause trouble. As we have already mentioned, we cannot regard such an argument as anything but an escape from the problem.

We suggest the following as a definition of what violence should and should not be broadcast, or at least as a basis for discussing such a definition:

> "Violence or oppression can be physical or mental. It can be structural violence (e.g. war, police abuses, the power of authorities and institutions over the individual, oppression arising from the sex-roles), violence between groups or individuals, violence within the individual (e.g. strong feelings of guilt owing to inadequate insight into the true nature of a problem), violence in nature, or violence between man and nature.
>
> All programmes, including entertainment programmes, give impulses which create, reinforce, or alter both our feelings, and our norms, values, and knowledge. The violence and oppression that one wishes to and

> must broadcast, shall therefore - like all other types of programme content - be broadcast with the intent to give impulses for desired feelings, norms, values and knowledge: i.e. in addition to the other desired influences of the programme, that the influence of the violence on aggression and fear leads towards constructive action, that the indifference to violence is not unnecessarily increased, that the violence supports such norms and values as are compatible with the democratic values, and that it does not lead to unrealistic conceptions of reality. One should in this way be able to motivate the amount of violence, the type of violence, and the context in which the violence is shown."

Commentary: this definition means a restrictiveness in the amount of violence, since unnecessary fear, unnecessary indifference to violence, and exaggerated conceptions of violence in reality should not be promoted. It also means that violence should be portrayed in a less one-sided manner than is now the case. It entails, further, that violence can be both described and explained in informative programmes, and embodied in dramatised programmes. On the other hand, violence cannot be broadcast as entertainment in the manner now prevalent in many dramatised programmes (e.g. in a high proportion of the imported entertainment programmes), since violence of this kind produces undesired effects. Certain elements of violence in other types of programme (e.g. news broadcasts and sports programmes) can also give rise to undesired effects. The need for excitement and entertainment should instead be satisfied by alternative programmes whose intention also are desired feelings, norms, values and knowledge.

This definition, unlike many others, does not exclusively take the purpose of the sender as the starting point ("speculative violence", "artistically well-motivated violence", "meaningless violence", "violence for its own sake"). Nor does it attempt to establish a label for the violence itself or the manner in which it is presented ("violence-as-entertainment", "unfeeling violence", "violence without a context"). Precisely the concept of "violence-as-entertainment" also provides a bridge to the audience - the viewer can be entertained. But this concept is a trap. Entertainment is a form, and it can therefore never be the sole effect. The effects of the actual content must also be considered.

In our attempt at a definition, the intention of the sender is instead motivated both by the objectives of the broadcasting activities and by the impressions that the audience may receive. And these impressions relate to both content and form. One cannot, naturally, always know what influences the programmes will have. But the research results give us a pretty good idea. One will be well on the road if one tries, on the basis of these results, to imagine as far as possible the influences of the violence envisaged.

To be able to apply articles and regulations, one also need realistic conditions. The Broadcasting Commission's proposals for mastering the imported programmes merely scrape the surface.

Great attention and significant resources should be devoted to testing and developing ideas about what excitement is, and what programmes are required in this respect.

When discussing how children are influenced by television, one cannot consider only the effects of violence-as-entertainment.

Children receive a great deal of positive inspiration from television - knowledge, emotional experience, company when one is alone, and subjects for discussion. Which has led, in its turn, for example to the world shrinking, and to a greater understanding of and interest in other people.

At the same time, however, television, apart from violence-as-entertainment, has other, negative or unintended effects. It has contributed, for example, to a consuming attitude to life, and probably to a dissatisfaction with ordinary, everyday life. It sometimes contributes to biassed conceptions of reality. Children are unwilling to refrain from watching, and particularly for those who already have problems with their families, peers and the school, constant viewing can further reinforce passivity and isolation. Insecure and isolated children are also those who most easily take impressions from television, in their emotions, norms and values. There is also a risk of television further increasing the knowledge gaps that exist between children with different life experiences.

In the extension of this pattern lie such phenomena as competition, individualism, the need to possess, indifference, and aggression.

To the ultimate question of whether television in this way maintains the basic democratic values or "the principle of all men's equal value, and of the individual's freedom and dignity", the answer must then be: only in part.

The reason for this is largely the great extent to which children watch entertainment programmes for adults. The Broadcasting Commission, however, does not draw any consequences from this, although it realises it is unrealistic to recommend parents to turn off the television. Did the Commission perhaps not know what impressions children take from television, apart from violence-as-entertainment? In all probability it did not entirely, but it must certainly have had some suspicion: Two main points of the Commission's report relate to children. The one deals precisely with violence. The other is to be found under the heading "General views on programme policy" in its report: "Radio and television should offer children and young people a many-facetted programme activity that is stimulating and activating, and that has a particular responsibility to avoid clichés, prejudices, and speculative or crude elements of violence".

This passage seems to reflect an awareness not only of the effects of violence-as-entertainment, but also of the influence of stereotyped programmes of other kinds.

The only problem is that the Commission is aiming off target. The sentence quoted leads our thoughts directly to the programmes made for children and young people.

But at the same time it is the programmes for adults that contain the most clichés, prejudices, and speculative or crude elements of violence!

As long as the relationship between children, television and radio has to do with children's programmes, most people fall in with the idea. But not only the programmes actually produced for children and young people, but also the adult programmes must be recommended to bear their responsibility towards the child audience. The knowledge we possess of children's conditions of life, and how children watch television and are influenced by it, must be made one of the corner-stones of the entire programme and media policy.

But then if one proposes quality improvements in all programmes, as the Broadcasting Commission does, will not these improvements in both children's and adult programmes be of benefit also to the children?

Yes, but on a fairly inadequate scale. The economic resources proposed are meagre. Nor can we see that the Commission has proposed any measure to try to eliminate the conflict between children and adult programmes. Or to put it more accurately: the conflict between on one hand the fact that certain adult programmes have negative influences on children, and on the other the fact that radio and television are supposed to promote democracy. On the contrary, the Commission's proposals for daytime broadcasts and the feeble measures proposed in connection with the foreign programmes mean an increase in that conflict!

The Broadcasting Commission, too, has fallen into the trap, become one of many symptoms of how far children are left "outside" and of how little their interests are protected.

We therefore consider that a passage should be incorporated in a central place in the Agreement, emphasising the responsibility of all programme activities towards children and young people.

So we're to turn the entire outfit into one huge Children's Television?

No, we agree with the Broadcasting Commission that no individual listener or viewer can expect to have his interests protected the entire time - the audience is not homogeneous, and various different interests must be provided for. But children and young people constitute a large group that more easily take impressions from the programmes than adults. Programmes that lead to undesired effects should not be broadcast.

Furthermore, many other things can be done without television and radio being taken over by rabbits and teddy-bears. The essential thing must be not to worsen the terms on which children live, but instead to take them as a premiss. If, for example, children are given, in their programmes, the tools with which to take initiative and act, and then fail to find any response in their surroundings, they may give up or undergo a negative experience that can aggravate the situation.

One could therefore, as we have said, send more children's programmes for the intermediate-age groups at a good early-evening viewing time (rabbits and teddy-bears are actually rare in these programmes) in order to stimulate communication between children and adults. One can produce more programmes that appeal to both children and adults, more programmes about children for adults, more programmes with both children and adults, and more adult programmes dealing with the same themes as children's programmes. One can provide more information about children's programmes in the adult programmes. And one can inform listeners and viewers of the importance of criticising and discussing the mass media.

To start from the terms of children, and of families with children, also means producing programmes about, for example, schools, day nurseries and leisure time, trying to show the causes of the terms on which they live, and trying to improve the opportunities of children and their families to influence and change their situation.

Reportage, factual programmes, theatre, music, entertainment etc. - all forms of programme are of course possible.

Purchases of Foreign Television Programmes

Adult programmes

Sveriges Radio buys almost half the television programmes it transmits. Almost all these programmes are imported from other countries. 1) The world statistics show that many countries are dependent upon imports to fill their television time, to between 30 and 85 %. It is much cheaper to buy programmes than to produce them.

The fact that a programme is imported need not imply anything negative. On the contrary, it is important to be able to see programmes from other cultures and language areas. Also, many of these programmes are of high quality. The importation of good programmes is thus a desirable aim.

As we have already mentioned, however, many imported programmes also mean problems, among other things because children are major consumers of adult entertainment, and partly are influenced by it in a negative way. Precisely adult entertainment is constituted to a very large extent by foreign productions. These programmes can also, since they are seen by many children whose reading ability is insufficiently developed, create major misconceptions.

In Sweden we predominantly use sub-titles. In the big television countries, most foreign material is dubbed. It has been impracticable to dub television programmes in Sweden, owing to a lack of economic and technical resources - particularly in view of the scale of the foreign supply. This applies to programmes for both children (from 7 years) and adults. Moreover, since the level

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1) Apart from in the case of music, hardly any foreign programmes are broadcast on the radio, since manuscripts, plays etc. are reprocessed for use in Sweden.

of general education in Sweden has been regarded as high, this method of processing has become the traditional solution.

In its budget for 1976/77, Sveriges Radio had to assume that foreign production in the "Entertainment" category would constitute a full seventy-five % in that sector. Even if we are positive to an internationalisation of the programme supply - to receiving impulses from different cultural environments - one must say, that the level of imports is too high. This depends largely on three factors, discussed in the following text: The distorted structure of the imports, the divergent norms and values in many of the imported programmes, and unsufficient resources for processing the foreign languages.

We know that the balance between purchases of entertainment programmes from different countries and continents is distorted, just as the balance between purchases of entertainment programmes as compared with documentaries, reportage, and informative programmes is distorted. No continuous, summarising statistics are available on where Sveriges Radio buys its programmes, but a compilation of data made at the request of the Broadcasting Commission's Organisation Group and relating to purchases from foreign countries during the period January - June 1975 shows that the United Kingdom and the USA account for half the foreign programmes. Twenty-nine countries were represented during the period, but the ten largest accounted for 90 % of the broadcasting time. About 95 % came from the Western world, about 4 % from the East, the Third World hardly being represented at all. The report shows that more than half of the imports comprised feature films and entertainment programmes, the dominant supplier of these being the USA.

It is in no way surprising that Sveriges Radio's list of imported programmes should show a predominance of Anglo-Saxon entertainment. Large parts of the world are highly dependent on the major television countries, and have higher import figures from them than we do. Often, smaller television countries do not have many national programmes to offer. Many countries in Latin America and

Africa, for example, can hardly afford to make their own programmes, and are forced to use cheap American products. In Sweden, the situation is that we must also in many cases reject the few national programmes offered by other countries, because the standards and values they express are often incompatible with our view of democracy. It is also common for productions from remote countries to be entirely built up, for commercial reasons, around "saleable" clichés, which reinforce rather than combat prejudices about the countries in question. Obviously, standards and values in conflict with our view of democracy also occur in Soviet and East European programmes. They frequently, for example, reflect an élitist thinking, and belief in authority.

In our discussions with producers and buyers, it has frequently been said that the imported material shown on Swedish television is the best available on the international market. They buy roughly one out of 10 - 20 programmes they look at, and one must bear in mind that the programmes under consideration are often those which the countries offering them themselves regard as best.

Apart from the distorted distribution between purchases from the Anglo-Saxon countries and from others, there is also a disbalance between the types of programmes purchased and those produced in Sweden. The bulk of the documentaries, reportage, and informative programmes are home-produced. The heavy, expensive entertainment programmes are bought to a large extent from outside, primarily from the USA.

This means that Swedish television audiences are being exposed on a major scale to the attitudes, standards and values prevailing in the production of the Anglo-Saxon countries. Is this, then, a negative thing?

Regrettably, content analyses of what is broadcast in Sweden have related almost exclusively to news programmes, but American research on entertainment programmes shows that it is the men, the whites, and the strong who are portrayed in the desirable roles, while women, blacks and various minority groups are mostly assigned subordinate roles, insofar as they appear in the programmes at all.

American research has also shown the great quantity of violence in the programmes, and how violence is often made the solution to conflicts, a means of achieving desired aims. It can be mentioned, by way of example, that American children see 30 elements of violence per hour when they watch animated cartoons, and 14 elements of violence per hour when they watch thrillers. These figures are admittedly not relevant to Swedish television, since we only import a selection of the American programmes (see p 70). The figures, however, should serve as a reminder to be on our guard.

What possibilities do we have of improving the situation? As regards the disbalance between the high proportion of imported entertainment and the low proportion of informative programmes, documentaries and reportage, there is little to be done. In the experience of the Swedish buyers, the availability of such programmes is declining rather than increasing, and it is already extremely small. In some countries, the documentary is actually a dying form.* Our "internationalisation" will thus relate mainly to the entertainment sector, but since it is mainly in these programmes that clichés, speculative violence, and the oppression of women, races and minorities spread themselves, this internationalisation will hardly involve to any great extent "to give and communicate valuable knowledge and impulses from different countries and environments and to combat the risks of levelling-down and a one-sided cultural influence", as the Broadcasting Commission wishes.

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* Our information is based on the view held by TV 2. We have, after the publication of this book in Swedish, been criticised on this point. TV 2 maintains its opinion that there is a shortage of documentaries on the international market. TV 1, on the other hand, holds the opposite view, and considers that the supply of documentaries is of a qualitatively and quantitatively high standard. TV 1 also claims that we could actually replace much of the traditional entertainment we import with purchases of so-called dramatised documentaries.

Another aspect of the international programmes is that they have to be translated in order to be comprehensible to viewers. The Broadcasting Commission has also proposed greater processing of these programmes to increase the benefit derived by viewers. Research into children´s programmes has shown that children between the ages of 7 and 12 have great difficulty in understanding the foreign children's programmes with sub-titles (See under the heading "Sub-titles, narration, or dubbing?"). To what difficulties and grave misconceptions, then, may not the foreign programmes for adults give rise? No research results are available on the sub-titled adult programmes, but it is probable that children - in that they have difficulty in reading the sub-titles fast enough - can easily misconceive what is being shown.

One can naturally, as the Broadcasting Commission suggests, try to achieve a higher quality and/or a better balance in the importation of foreign programmes by making more purchasing trips, and spending more money. Even so, we doubt very much whether it is possible by such means to achieve an "increased geographical, linguistic and cultural spread." The villain of the piece seems rather to be the lack of good, genuine programmes from other countries. If other countries than the USA and England were in a position to create genuine domestic programmes - both fiction and documentaries - the situation would be very much brighter.

If, then, it is impossible to improve the quality and/or balance, and if it is impossible to combat levelling-down and a one-sided cultural influence, then imports of foreign programmes must simply be reduced. It is unreasonable, surely, that we should be dependent for the filling of a high proportion of transmission time upon programmes whose standards, values, and attitudes run contrary to the prevailing view of society. The programmes of good quality must naturally be shown, but we certainly should not entice children to watch "filler" programmes simply for the lack of anything better. The resources must be created for domestic production of high-quality programmes. The only alternative solution is simply to cut down transmission times, and/or rebroadcast the good programmes.

Children's programmes

With children's programmes, as with adult programmes, no continuous statistics are available on the countries of origin. However, at a Nordvision meeting between those responsible for children's programmes in the Nordic countries, the Children's Programmes Division of TV 1 presented a distribution of the foreign (non-Nordic) material broadcast between October 1976 and March 1977. This distribution suggests that the situation is slightly different from that with adult programmes. Almost 10 % of the foreign productions for children, as calculated in transmission time, come from the East, the corresponding figure for adult programmes being almost negligible. The corresponding division at TV 2 also reports greater imports from the East than the divisions for adult programmes. The divisions for children's and adult programmes also differ in that there is more cooperation and exchange of programmes between the Nordic divisions for children's programmes.

No real content analyses are available of either purchased or home-produced children's programmes. However, the children's divisions at Sveriges Radio are very concerned to ensure that the standards and values reflected by their programmes should agree with a democratic way of thought.

But even if the balance between certain world blocs is somewhat better with regard to the supply of children's programmes than for adult programmes, there are other problems in this sector. Owing to cut-backs in resources in recent years, the children's programmes divisions have become still more dependent on imports. Also, these divisions experience far greater difficulties than those for adult programmes in finding foreign programmes of good quality. It is particularly difficult to find programmes for the smaller children, who need to recognise their own immediate environment.

The two children's divisions in Swedish television have chosen different strategies in order to fill their transmission time. TV 1 has chosen to broadcast 60 % foreign production (75 % for 7 - 12-year-olds, and 30 - 40 % for preschool children). TV 2, on the other hand, has chosen to send a higher proportion of repeats, mainly of domestic material. In this way, it avoids sending foreign material of poor quality (70 % own production plus repeats, and 30 % imports for preschool children and the intermediate children, 7 - 12 years of age).* Repeats are in themselves a good thing and should be encouraged, but in the present situation they occur too closely in time, and far too often. It may seem somewhat inconsistent that we should not be positive to all repeats for children, since we recommend more repeats of good adult programmes. But one must remember that the children only have a very small number of programmes a day between which they can choose, as compared with adults. Good children's programmes should naturally be repeated, after a longer period of time. "Instant" repeats, for example the following day, for those children who were unable to watch at the regular time are also a positive phenomenon, if a special transmission time is available for this purpose.

What, then, can be done to improve the situation, since it is considered that neither the Western nor the Eastern international market offers enough good programmes? Naturally, the children's divisions must be assigned the same premisses to work from as those producing adult programmes, i.e. they must try to improve the quality and/or balance of their supply. Here, however, it is of still greater importance that - if fully adequate foreign material is unavailable - they should be assigned greater resources for own production, and production by freelance producers. In no circumstances must the proportion of transmission time devoted to children's programmes be reduced. Increased time and increased resources must be allocated for domestic programmes of high quality.

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* These figures vary somewhat from year to year, in both channels.

Sub-titles, narration or dubbing?

When it comes to foreign productions, quality and/or balance are not the only problems. Of at least equal importance is that programmes should be made accessible - comprehensible - to viewers. As already mentioned, programmes for adults and for children in the 7 - 12 age-group are sub-titled. (Programmes for preschool children are always given Swedish voices.)

Those responsible for children's programmes have long been aware that children in the intermediate age-group of 7 - 12, have difficulty in understanding and following the action in the foreign children's programmes with sub-titles. How great are these difficulties, and by what age have they been mastered? In a study of the series "Catweazle" that was currently popular and well-known to children, it emerged that a majority of children in the 7 - 12 age-group had understood less than half of the essential action, and in each age-group only a minority had understood more than three-quarters of the essential action.

The misconceptions were many, and sometimes enormous. Many children, for example, when the wizard was about to protect a priest with a magic knife, thought that he was actually going to murder the priest. The "collection" ("kollekt") became a "pork chop" ("fläskkotlett") and so on.

What is to be gained in understanding by other methods of processing than sub-titling? And how do the older children experience a method of processing especially designed for the younger children? Dubbing is often assumed to be superior to all other methods of processing, but just how much better than others is it?

A study was made of a programme processed in four different ways, with 1) a sub-titled version, 2) a dubbed version, 3) a narrated version, and 4) a version with narrator plus sub-titles.

The study was made on children in certain "critical" ages, 7-8, 8-9 and 10-11 years.

Their understanding of the programme naturally increased with age, regardless of the version they had seen. However, the difference between the ages was not as great as that between certain versions. In all these age-groups, understanding of the sub-titled version was less than with the three other versions.

The differences between the three other versions were very small. We had expected the dubbed version to be superior. Instead, the results showed that the dubbed version gave slightly less understanding of the programme than the two narrated versions in the two youngest age-groups. This may have been partly due to the fact that the dubbed version was a direct translation of the lines, while the two versions with a narrator gave a certain amount of supplementary information.

This study thus showed very clearly that the most common way of processing - sub-titling - is vastly inferior to the other versions, not only in the lowest school ages, but also for children of 10 and 11.

Also, relatively few negative attitudes were noted among the older children towards the three "Swedish-speaking" versions, and they can be practically neglected by comparison with the great gains in understanding these versions gave in all the age-groups investigated.

One further alternative type of processing has been studied, namely when the voice of the narrator is broadcast on a separate radio channel parallel with the television programme, which is sub-titled. The object of study here was not so much understanding of the programmes, but mainly how far children utilised the opportunity to hear the radio narration, and attitudes to this.

The study covered children between the ages of 5 and 11, and it was made in connection with TV 2's first attempts to broadcast "film matinées" with radio narrators, around Christmas 1971.

Rather more than half the children who watched the films also listened the whole time to the radio. There were differences, however, between certain age-groups. Some 70 % of the 5 - 8-year-olds listened, and about 50 % of the 9-year-olds, after which listening declined, but never fell below 20 %.

Both children and parents were very positive towards this new system, and the negative comments made were mainly from the older children, who complained that the sound failed to fit the sub-titles - "the voice on the radio couldn't read properly." (This was improved in subsequent broadcasts.)

In spite of all this evidence, that sub-titling is an inadequate method of rendering programmes comprehensible to children, nothing has been done to improve the situation. The reasons are economic, and only on a few, isolated occasions, such as the Christmas "film matinées", have the resources been allocated for supplementary processing.

If it is necessary, for economic reasons, to retain the system of sub-titling, how long must sub-titles of different lengths be exposed for the children to have time to read and understand them?

Children's programmes are sub-titled on the same principles as adult programmes. There exist now rules of thumb for how long a sub-title should be kept on screen - 4 seconds for a "single-liner", 6 seconds for a "double-liner" are the approximate guidelines. Shorter exposure times, however, often occur, because the sub-title must be synchronised with the picture and action.

We tested three alternative times for sub-titles of 1, 1½, and 2 lines respectively. The times were chosen after children between the ages of 8 and 10 had themselves been allowed to select their reading-times for sub-titles on television. They pressed the sub-titles forward on the screen at their own rate of reading, and the time each sub-title was exposed was automatically registered.

The shortest times were slightly shorter than allowed for by the rules of thumb, but probably correspond to frequent exposure times in reality. The intermediate times were somewhat longer than recommended by the rules of thumb, while the longest times (5,7 and 9 seconds, respectively, for the 1, 1½, and 2-line texts) were judged to be realistic for programme activities. Longer times would hardly be applicable in practice.

We sub-titled in this way three television programmes, all of which dealt with animals in the wilds, and contained numerous exciting elements. We thus acquired nine versions of programmes.

We obtained a clear correlation between the times for which sub-titles were exposed and understanding of the programmes. The longer sub-titles were exposed, the better the programmes were understood. Even so, the results were depressing so far as the "poor readers" were concerned. (We had divided the children into two equal groups according to the points achieved in a standard reading test, the better readers and the poorer readers.) These children did not, either in the 8-year-old or 9-year-old group, achieve a satisfactory understanding of the story with any of the exposure times, not even the longest. In the 10-year-old group, these children could satisfactorily read two of the three stories, but only with the longest exposure times.

How, then, are we to meet the need of children in these ages for an alternative to sub-titles in the foreign programmes for children? It would be unrealistic to solve the problem by having even longer exposure times. Dubbing is a way of eliminating the reading problem entirely, but it impairs at the same time the opportunities of deaf and hard-of-hearing children to understand programmes. Dubbing also has other disadvantages, in that the speech and voices of people in the original language are lost. It is an advantage, for example, to be able to hear how English is really spoken, and to get to recognise different languages. There is also a risk of children forgetting that they are watching a foreign programme, and experiencing foreign standards and attitudes as current in our own country, since they are expressed in Swedish.

Another factor is that children see a lot of sub-titled programmes for adults and must be trained to read sub-titles, for which reason we do not consider they should be done away with in children's programmes. To have a speaker read the text displayed is one way of supporting the children in their own reading, by keeping them always "a step ahead", and providing confirmation of what they themselves have had time to read, thus considerably reducing the risk of misunderstandings.

The ideal solution would be to have the sub-titles read on a separate radio channel and not on television, giving maximum options to children with different needs.

Conclusions and proposals

The Broadcasting Commission considers that television should "also have an international scope". At the same time, as we have mentioned, it is concerned to combat "the risks of levelling-down and a one-sided cultural influence." The recipe, according to the Commission, is greater economic resources for, among other things, more travel to more countries in order to achieve a more conscious purchasing policy. An actual increase (!) in the number of programmes purchased is also proposed (2 hours per week).

We doubt very much whether the supply of foreign programmes on Swedish television can be improved in this way. The real problem is rather the lack of good programmes. Nor, in all probability, will the supply of good programmes increase in the foreseeable future.*

The disbalance in exports and imports of television programmes the world over is a question that has attracted considerable attention internationally - in the television corporations, in UNESCO, and in research. A considerable proportion of the supply in the mass media is produced with a view to the international market, rather than for national use, which tends to superficialise the content. Increasing protests have been made by the small and/or poor nations, owing to their dependence on the major television countries, and the one-sided influence to which they are subjected. More radical measures than an increase in travel by the buyers is needed to combat this situation.

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* See, however, the note on p 80.

As we understand it, great efforts are now being made by Sveriges Radio to go outside the established distribution chains to seek out and choose between the more genuinely national programmes that have remained within the frontiers. The results, however, have been meagre.

To some extent, of course, people's ideas as to what is "good quality" are steered by the programmes customarily broadcast, and to which people have become accustomed. Even if it were possible to increase our purchases of national programmes from countries that are today very scantily represented on Swedish television, they would hardly, however, in today's situation, be able to replace to any great extent the one-sided international imported entertainment, as the Broadcasting Commission appears to hope. The members of the Commission are concerned to put a greater emphasis on entertainment and drama than is at present the case. But what is entertainment in one country is not always entertaining in another, since programmes are often difficult to understand when detached from their cultural context.

An increase in the number of imported programmes thus seems utterly unreasonable. The conclusion, on the contrary, should be that we must reduce the high quota of imports now envisaged. In addition to more buying trips and more radical efforts on the world market, we must instead make a strong investment in Swedish production, both by Sveriges Radio and independent producers. Resources must be created that will permit a richly varied supply of such programmes for both children and adults. Particularly in the case of children, there is not simply a risk that they will be influenced by the many fictional programmes, series, thrillers etc they see - they are already influenced (see the chapter on "How children are influenced by television").

There is, in our opinion, a great lack of dramatised programmes produced by Sveriges Radio itself. We have already indicated the need for many more programmes that will engage the viewers, programmes appealing to both children and adults. Both the adult and children's programmes divisions should be given greater opportunities to create such programmes.

If we cannot afford to achieve variety and high quality by our own productions, then we should accept the consequences of this and cut down the total transmission time. One can also send more repeats of good adult programmes. But to be unable to invest in our own production and still, as the Broadcasting Commission proposes, have the resources to increase the transmission time by a daytime block is paradoxical.

The Commission also wants to increase the "accessibility" of foreign programmes by processing, i.e. by the dubbing of more foreign programmes.

It is very important that the children's programmes imported be made more comprehensible. But the proposal to dub programmes is perhaps not the best solution. Dubbing does not give a greater understanding of programmes than several other methods of processing, and it has, as we have mentioned, definite disadvantages. A better solution would be a combination of linguistically well-adapted sub-titles and a narrator on a separate radio channel.

A narrator's or speaker's voice of this kind would claim between two and four hours a week of the total radio transmission time of 360 hours. In addition to which, a new radio channel, P 4, has been proposed.

Finally, a simple source of bewilderment: The Commission notes that dubbing can make the costs of foreign children´s programmes comparable with those of domestic production. Why, then, does the Commission not propose a higher proportion of home-produced children's programmes?

Children with Different Opportunities

Who are the so-called under-resourced children?

One sometimes hears expressions like "understimulated" or "underprivileged" children. During the Seventies it has perhaps become more common to speak of "disadvantaged" children, or in Sweden of "under-resourced" children and those with "special needs",but these concepts seem to cover roughly the same thing. Many of these and similar terms are used also of adults. The terms occur in, for example, the reports of government commissions, debating articles,research papers, and the radio and television company.

Who, then,are these children, and what can be done for them? We shall not be giving any final answers to these questions. We shall not, for example, offer any concrete proposals as how best to create programmes for "under-resourced" groups. What we are concerned to do is to try to demonstrate that the premisses must be clarified before deciding on any specific approach. This applies to all these terms, and we shall therefore use them interchangeably.

Children were not better off in the "old days"

There is a tendency in the debate to idealise bygone times, or to believe that people's general condition in Sweden are steadily deteriorating over the years. Some have also expressed the opinion that the cause of the problems is our high material standard-of-living itself, or that people in Sweden have a poorer emotional life than in other countries. It is often risky to draw such conclusions. If one adopts a slightly longer and wider perspective, it is difficult to find any empirical evidence. The sporadic results produced by statistics and studies point in different directions, and can be interpreted in different ways. Sometimes the problem "arises" simply because it has not previously been noticed.

In the case of children, one cannot claim that they were better off in the old days. They often had a rough time indeed. Many children were assaulted and beaten, and were obliged at an early age to help support the family, or to support themselves, by mentally and physically arduous work. Hunger, poverty, overcrowding, and disease were common. The infant mortality rate was high.

Today, generally speaking, Swedish children are in good physical health. Furthermore, almost all attend preschool for a year or so, and the Basic School for nine years. Increasing numbers are pursuing their studies to an ever higher age. Books on the upbringing of children published in the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies have been dominated by ideas about the freedom and independence of children. Children and young people also have plenty of leisure time. They get toys, games, sporting equipment, capital goods, and often a great deal of clothing.

In spite of all this, alarming reports appear in the newspapers concerning the abuse of alcohol, drugs, and medical preparations; about criminality, prostitution, and child pornography; about mobbing, child-battering, and suicide among children.

What we can thus say with certainty is that problems exist here and now, problems which are still not solved - or have appeared when others have been eliminated. In many respects, children today live in very favourable circumstances. But they, too, have difficulties. Above all, their situation, and the immediate causes of their problems, are different from what they were previously.

As regards in first hand the sociological research and the debate about children in Sweden during the Seventies, one can trace, as we see it, three main ways of regarding the situation and problems of children, and which children are disadvantaged, under-resourced etc. These three views are based largely on each other.

Are all children "under-resourced"?

By the first way of thinking, it would be possible to maintain that all children are under-resourced, i.e. children as a group in relation to adults or other groups of society.

Naturally, children are always under-resourced in a sense. They cannot decide everything for themselves. They cannot and should not take upon themselves the same burdens as adults. Precisely because they are children, they must be able to rely on adults. But what the analysis reveals is that children have become a residual item in social devemopment.

This view incorporates the following social perspective: We live in a segregated or sectorised society, in which the family, the preschool, the school, working life etc. are seen as and constitute clearly delimited and separate units with different functions. The extended family or household of former days, a producing, self-supporting unit with numerous persons and functions, has been dissolved, and replaced by, among other things, a small, nuclear family, a consuming unit that must also to a large extent satisfy the individual's emotional needs. At the workplace, on the other hand, one should produce, be efficient, compete etc. In a similar way we distinguish between, for example, work, leisure time, culture, politics, and private life.

The roots of this society are, among other things, the industrialisation, market liberalism, and other libertarian concepts. Development has been guided by the goals of increased production and increased welfare. This development meant, inter alia, an increasingly specialised division of labour, urbanisation, less contact with nature, increased mobility, the dissolution of previous ties of kinship and friendship, and, at least in this sense more independent individuals, with no common culture, or commonly binding standards and values.

Increased production and welfare (with the emphasis on the material standard-of-living and social benefits) also meant increased consumption. Environmental pollution, the exploitation of the poorer countries, and energy problems have been the result. Attention has also been drawn to a long succession of possible consequences of this development - for example, an increased bureaucratisation, anonymity, a need of possessions, egoism, powerlessness, frustration, and aggression.

One can thus ask somewhat provocatively, as many people have done, what functions children have in today's sectorised society. The family is no longer dependent on them for its support, or material security. Those who have brought this issue to a point in the debate maintain, on the contrary, that children are expensive and an obstacle to people's careers. Nor are they particularly important to the society once they have grown up - the labour problem can be solved by immigrants. Since the need of children has obviously declined, so too has the need to control their behaviour.

The argument is thus that, while children's conditions have improved, the children have also, in their homes, and in the preschools and schools, become isolated from and alien to adult life and production. Much of what children learn in school bears no direct relationship to the world they see around them. They have few opportunities to apply their knowledge in practice. While they have been relieved of arduous obligations as providers, and acquired greater liberty, longer leisure and a longer childhood, they have not been given the responsibility for any other duties instead, or any meaningful tasks to perform. Children spend a great deal of time with their peers and have inadequate contacts with adults - above all with men, the old, and adults in different occupational roles. But the fact that children have acquired great independence does not mean that the parents have no influence on them. Not to adopt a position or not to say what you think, this also demonstrates an attitude to life from which children can take impression. At the same time, room is created for other sources of influence. Since children are exposed to numerous and conflicting norms, a lack of clear models, there is great free play for consumption, commercial pressure, and influence by the mass media. Also, children are more susceptible than adults.

What facts are there then, which support this increasingly common view? Some examples:

The birth rate, which has risen and fallen at different epochs, has been declining in Sweden since 1965. It emerged, in a study, that the main reasons for Swedes not having children were "problems with childminding", "lack of money", "we live in too insecure a world", and "children take too much time".

Further, a number of studies have come to the conclusion that all talk about generation gaps is not due to protests on the part of the young, but to the fact that young and adult have little contact, are physically isolated from each other.

Other studies, in which children in several countries have written essays and made drawings, suggest a greater loneliness, and a greater fear of loneliness, among Swedish children.

Community planning also affords examples: in Skärholmen, a Stockholm suburb, there were to start with 47 places in day nurseries, and 4,000 parking places.

Another example is provided by the report of the government's Cultural Commission "New Cultural Policy" (1972), which was to deal with the entire Swedish cultural situation. The report dealt with the situation of children in a couple of short, vague passages. Children, young people, and families with children were discussed together with the handicapped, immigrants, and those living in sparsely population areas. And yet a growing part of the privately-owned mass media and leisure industry is aimed at children and young people as a target group. Children's culture today is highly commercialised.

It thus seems as if the facts support the analysis.

Boredom, mobbing, mental disturbances, and violence - do these things occur because we pay too little attention to each other? Because we are indifferent? Because we don't have the time? And because of a lack of freedom, in the form of isolation, lack of function, lack of responsibility, lack of meaning, lack of power?

To possess ample resources, or to be privileged, usually means having money, possessions, knowledge, physical and mental energy, social relationships, a feeling of security etc., with the help of which one can influence one's own condition of life, and achieve valuable objectives. Such a definition, however, is somewhat irrelevant for children. The greatest resources children possess are those people who devote time and interest to them. Children themselves have little opportunity to make their voices heard. Children grow up on the terms of adults.

During the last ten years or so, increasing numbers of people have begun to protest at the way in which children are ignored. Quite a few measures have been taken. Apart from the Child Care Act, the Children's Welfare Centres etc., various bodies have been set up to protect the rights of children. In 1971, the Swedish Association for Children's Rights (BRIS) was established. The Swedish Save the Children Fund has a special ombudsman for Swedish children. A succession of government commissions have studied the situation of children, and families with children, and their reports include "The Preschool" (1972), "The Leisure Time of Children" (1974), "Report on the Environment of Children" (1975), "The Internal Work of the School" (1975) and " Shorter Working Hours for the Parents of Small Children" (1975). Following the report of the government's Cultural Commission, a special Children's Culture Group was set up in 1974, at the requestion of various bodies to whom the report had been circulated for comment. The Children's Film Council and the Children's Environment Group was set up in 1976. Research about children has also increased strongly in recent years.

These more formal, more organisational measures, as we can call them, are often absolutely necessary as things are now, and may be for all future time. This, however, does not mean that the rest of society may continue on its way regardless. In that case there is a risk that many of the formal measures taken will also reinforce the present sectorisation. That, for the majority of adults, children will definitively become an outside minority group.

The great majority of adults are, very certainly, concerned with the children's best. But then - as the organisations, the institutions, etc. themselves maintain -

the adults must begin to take also a serious interest in children's lives. And this does not mean trying to adapt children to the current order of things. To improve the terms on which children live, also mean radical changes in the lives of adults.

Which children are more "under-resourced" than others?

The second way of viewing the situation and problems of children is to distinguish between groups that are more or less "under-resourced" or "under-privileged". As we have said, this view does not run counter to the preceding. On the contrary, it often starts from the same social perspective, the sectorised society, and it can then be seen as a continuation of the analysis. In research, and in the debate on children, attention has been drawn, among other things, to the following possible causes of weak resources or inadequate stimulation:

There is a risk of the child not receiving adequate emotional stimulation in the home, or its immediate surroundings. The small, isolated, nuclear family is often unable to meet the many emotional needs of its members. Conflicts can therefore arise. Things are not made easier by the circumstances that, for example, the parents often have their jobs a long way away from the home, which means long journeys; that the parents can bring repressed feelings with them home from work; or that many mothers working at home are under-stimulated. Or by the fact that many residential environments in, for example, the suburbs have not been planned and built to combat isolation, but instead often function in such a way as to reinforce it. The perschool has a task to fulfil in this respect, and research also suggests that the preschool is of particular importance for children who are underprivileged in different respects. But only about one tenth of children attend day care centers* and the general preschool set up in 1975 lasts, for the great majority of children only one year (at the age of six).

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* In November 1977 the children 0-6 years old who attend day care centers had increased to around 20 %.

By comparison with the preschool, the regular school does not give children very much emotional support. It is partly a preparation for working life, so that performance, efficiency and competition are encouraged by the award of marks. All schoolchildren experience a large measure of cognitive stimulation. But the knowledge taught is theoretical, factual, and "objective", knowledge not relating to many children's own experiences, or to the occupations and the society they see around them. If one's own experience does not count, one has more difficulty in understanding and using the information. This means that the school selects out certain children. Those who manage best are children from families with a higher education, families who at an earlier stage and parallel with the school provide the child with cognitive stimulation of the same kind as the school. It is thus to a large extent the type of the knowledge imparted that decides whether a given child is under-resourced or not from the school's point of view.

Similar circumstances prevail with regard to the linguistic stimulation. Research has shown that if one is allowed to talk on one's own terms, in a free, informal situation, then the majority of children have a rich language. But in a more formal verbal situation like that at the school great differences emerge, so that middle-class children cope better than working-class children. Other groups of children who are often under-resourced linguistically are immigrant children, and deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

Furthermore, the school is an institution which to a great extent imparts readymade knowledge. The teacher is far more active than the pupils. Probably, the school therefore fails to provide sufficient stimulation of creativity and essential activity. The work of the teacher is not, of course, facilitated by large schools and classes. This lack of stimulation may be one of the reasons why children from the lower social groups tend to cope with school less well. It is not, after all, certain that children of a higher socio-economic status are also consistently more creative than other children. - But are not children stimulated in these respects at the afternoon leisure centres? The places at such centres are still very limited, they provide only for a few per cent of the younger schoolchildren.

Children can also possess inadequate physical resources. Some children have innate or environmental injuries, e.g. children who are orthopaedically handicapped, of impaired vision, or who have been injured in traffic accidents. Sometimes, these children live at special institutions.

As we have said, those children who do not, at home, in the preschool, in the school, at the leisure centre, or in some institution, receive sufficient or the right sort of emotional, cognitive, linguistic, or physical stimulation, or stimulation to creativity and activity, find, in the sectorised society, their main resort among their peers, and in the mass media. The peers and the mass media provide a high proportion of their social stimulation. They also provide the impulses towards various norms and values. But what happens to the children who have difficulty in finding friends they like...? And who also have a difficult time of it at home, or with their teachers...?

Moreover, children have disparate social or socio-economic resources (with regard, for example, to the education, occupation and income of their parents). We have already given examples of how the children of parents of lower socio-economic status are under-privileged by comparison with children whose parents enjoy a higher socio-economic status.

We have thus introduced the resources of the parents into the picture. The living standards and personal resources of the parents in all the fields listed above determine the extent to which they themselves can stimulate their children. The younger the child, the more dependent it is on others. We can thus speak of a gradual development of different types of resources from these adults to the child itself.

How many children, then, can be classified as "under-resourced"? Of almost two million children domiciled in Sweden, c. 2,500 have impaired hearing. Many of the immigrant children, who comprise in total c. 8 % of all children in Sweden, have inadequate linguistic and socio-economic resources. After which, calculations become more difficult. How many children receive inadequate emotional stimulation? Is it the 25 per cent that were judged, in one study, to be in need of mental care? (The study related to boys between the ages of 10 and 12 in Stockholm.) Or the almost two-thirds of all children of school age who wish they had someone they could talk to (19 % wish this frequently, and 44 % sometimes)? How many are under-resourced cognitively and linguistically? Is it the 10 - 40 % of all 12 - 15-year-olds who have reading difficulties? (The figures vary according to the definitions of the researchers.) Or is it the children with low marks? Or practically all the children of parents who do not have a higher education? And how many get insufficient stimulation to creativity and activity? How many have inadequate physical resources? Social contacts? Socio-economic resources? Under-privileged parents?

Often, of course, the lack of resources, the under-stimulation etc. is not due to any few, easily identifiable factors, but is the product of mutually dependent phenomena. A large number of studies show that a child's various resources or lacks of resources hang together in different ways. But however one re-works and rephrases the problem, one arrives at the conclusion that as long as we are speaking generally of under-resourced, disadvantaged children etc., without specifying more precisely what we mean, then these children comprise a very large group, i.e. the majority. The same applies to adults.

Is lower socio-economic status the decisive factor?

The third way of viewing the situation of children is similarly not in direct conflict with the two preceding. This theory also sees society as delimited. It also sees children as caught between different forces, and quotes similar short-term and more deep-running causes for the lack of resources evident for different groups of children. But it makes an important addition, which is also its main thesis, namely that the most essential cause of the situation is our economic social system, which has given rise to the socio-economic differences, the conflicts of interest, and the distribution of power in the society.

Those who exercise the greatest influence - the employers, those who receive the profit, the middle and upper classes, those with a higher socio-economic status - are the privileged. The majority, those who work and live on the former group's terms, are the under-privileged. The privileged sometimes improve the situation of the under-privileged, but the changes made are never decisive. On the whole, the few continue to exercise their social control, since they protect their own interests.

The values predominating in society are precisely the values of the privileged - individual success, independence etc. The school, which in its imparting of knowledge values these properties in a positive manner, sorts out certain pupils, and notes that others cope less well, thus legimitimising the doings and statements of the privileged. The nuclear family fits well into the system, since it helps to isolate the majority and keep them unaware of their situation.

The mass media, too, contribute to serve the interests of the privileged, by communicating above all their values, and present a picture of reality that is for most people fragmentary and difficult to comprehend. The content of the mass media is produced, after all, by the middle class, and the majority of mass media are owned by people who make money from them.

What facts about children exist to support this view? Some examples:

The Commission on Low Incomes* revealed that even if certain changes have occurred over the years, children's chances in life are almost entirely dependent on the environment in which they are brought up, on the father's occupation, and on the social group to which they belong.

Other studies show that large differences in income still exist between different families with children, in spite of family allowances, housing allowances etc. It is obvious that the conditions of life of low-income families are more meagre in every respect, and poorer in educational and cultural activities. The families maintaining a high standard afford their children a better educational environment, and launch them from the very beginning into the careerist society of the educational system.

Studies of how parents bring up their children have concluded that such qualities as independence, individual success, and the right to determine on one's own are emphasised in the families with a high level of education. In working-class families, the emphasis is on obedience and belief in authority.

To give a final example from the research: the socially handicapped fail to retain, relatively speaking, even the linguistic knowledge they have acquired at preschool age. On the contrary, their knowledge of language deteriorates after their nine years in Basic School. The school appears to have increased the gaps between pupils with different social backgrounds.

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* The Commission on Low Incomes, the reports of which were published in the early Seventies, was a major government commission on the living conditions of Swedes during the 20th century. The Social Democrats, who had been in government since 1932, had pursued a reformist policy of quality, and it was widely believed - even by those in other parties - that this policy had been crowned with success, and that Swedish society in the late Sixties was characterised by social justice. The Commission on Low Incomes was controversial in that it demonstrated unexpectedly large socio-economic and other gaps between different population groups. It was discontinued, and never published any final report.

It thus looks as if the facts support also the third view. As with the previous view, the majority of children can here be classified as under-privileged. It should be added, finally, that the two previous views outlined are the most common among researchers and those contributing to the debate. According to the third way of thinking, the researchers and debaters, since they belong to the privileged group in society, apply that model which makes it possible for them to maintain their position.

What, then, do we know in greater detail of the role played by television and radio in this process? Do the studies made of children and mass media provide any further guidance?

Television and radio today

Summarising the relatively scanty research results that somewhat illustrate how so-called under-resourced or disadvantaged groups of children use and are influenced by radio and television, we find the following picture:

Of radio listening, we know practically nothing. To most children, radio essentially means music. As we have already noted, only about half of all children of pre-school age, for example, ever listen to the "Children's Radio" on P 1. We know very little of the background of these children, only that their parents are often active, interested, and listen to P 1 themselves. They also have a positive attitude towards radio for children: "Children need to learn to listen, too, and not just look at pictures".

In the case of television viewing, we know rather more:

The children of parents with little education, for example, watch television more than other children. They also seem to see more of all types of programmes, both children's programmes, and informative and entertaining adult programmes, respectively. This fits the adults' choice of programmes. It is namely the case that adults with little education not only watch the programmes with a so-called "broad appeal", but are also - contrary to what many people seem to think - more frequent viewers of the informative programmes.

Another group of children that watches television more than other children comprises those who are isolated, insecure, and have problems in their contacts with peers and adults. These children are also more often aggressive, depressed, or subject to anxiety.

Children who watch television a lot often have parents who watch a lot. Parents who themselves have an insufficiently stimulating environment accord greater space to television than other parents.

What, then, does television achieve? In the chapter "How children are influenced by television", it emerged that certain influences from television - both positive and negative - concern practically all children. In a number of cases, however, the influences concern primarily the children watching a lot of television:

The children of parents with a poor educational background seem to have greater difficulty in acquiring knowledge from the programmes. The same seems to apply to insecure and isolated children, i.e. children lacking adequate emotional stimulation. (These two groups are of course not identical.)

Insecure and isolated children are also the most susceptible to impressions from television as regards emotions such as aggression and fear, and as regards norms and values. People are also more influenced by television in their norms and values when they lack knowledge or experience of their own in the subject concerned.

In addition, television viewing can, with certain children, reinforce an already existing passivity, isolation, and dependence upon television, even it the children and parents are watching together. The least interested and most insecure parents orientate towards the television rather than the child, so that television fails to become the additional resource it could be.

In a study of some fifty families with preschool children, one thing emerged that was common to all the children watching a lot of television: they were either allowed to watch until all programmes were over, or else fell asleep in the sofa while the rest of the family watched. These children had no special procedure at bed-time, for example that someone should read to them, or other particular ritual. The parents saw nothing wrong in the children falling asleep in front of the television, and their attitude to television and its possible effects was in general totally uncritical. Even if some of them noticed a number of negative effects from the child's television viewing, they nevertheless did nothing to prevent the child from watching, for example, frightening programmes: "J. often has nightmares but it's only the television".

Finally: it is not only the children who have unsatisfactory contacts with adults and other children that have fewer chances of talking about programmes - which, as we know, can weaken negative influences from television, and reinforce positive. It is also the case that parents with little education discuss programmes with their children less often than the more educated parents.

Is it, then, necessary that television should contribute to the extent it does to these vicious circles - reinforcing the existing knowledge gaps, reinforcing gaps in respect of emotions, norms and values, and increasing children's passivity, isolation, and dependence upon television (results which, by the way, do not contradict the different ways of regarding the situation and problems of children outlined above)? No, it emerges from certain research examples that television also has possibilities to improve the situation, or at least not broaden the gaps:

One must remember that the results arrived at with regard to knowledge gaps, namely that television seems to contribute to them, relates to the intended information, that which the producer is concerned to convey. Consequently, this does not always justify the assumption that certain children have not learned or not understood. The children of parents with low socio-economic status, for example, sometimes find other information than that intended more useful. Or seek it without finding it, because producers - like researchers - usually come from a different environment.

A study that illustrates this circumstance relates to a series of television programmes designed to stimulate the interest of children and their parents in books. The children who began to read the books occurring in the programmes, or who asked their parents to read aloud to them after the programmes, had, almost all of them, parents with a high level of education. However, the children of working-class families had, among other things, more often invented games in connection with the programmes. All in all, just as many children from the different social groups appeared to have been stimulated to activities by the programmes - but they had utilised them in different ways.

The same thing was observed in a study of some programmes in the series "Five ants are more than four elephants".* The great majority of children learned something from the factual knowledge these programmes were concerned to promote. The children who knew most in advance did, however, learn more. But there was no such difference between the children with regard to activation in a general sense.

A third example is a radio programme for young people which was designed to impart factual knowledge regarding the study opportunities of apprentices. Four groups - pupils in High School, pupils in the last year of the Basic School, apprentices, and young people at reform schools - were asked to listen. It emerged that the apprentices and the young people at reform schools understood the programme better than the two other groups. They also preferred it that ordinary people - as in the programme - should be speaking rather than experts.

But examples like this last are rare in the research. Usually, the intended information in radio and television programmes seems not to relate most to the experience of - or to be most useable by - those children who watch a lot of television.

When it comes to stimulating discussion, certain children's programmes have attempted, as we have said, to reach children and adults simultaneously. Some of these attempts have been successful, others less so. Since parents do not normally give attention to the children's programmes, such programmes must be made particularly attractive or broadcast at times more convenient for adults than at present. It is an advantage if the programmes are in a series, so that parents can become involved with them in course of time. Similarly, it is an advantage if the subject is considered simple by the parents, so that they can feel self-assured.

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* For this programme, see p 20 and 46.

Many adult programmes, too,are concerned to stimulate debate. However, very large investments in such programmes are required, if they are to be able to modify the influence of the clichés and prejudices that often occur in the imported, expensively produced entertainment programmes and series which children consume on such a large scale. People do, after all, adopt norms and values - both positive and negative - more easily if the programme is exciting, if it affords possibilities of identification, and if the norms and values recur in programme after programme. The same applies to the acquisition of knowledge, unless the emotional involvement of the viewer is too strong. And, as we have mentioned, it is not only from children's programmes and informative adult programmes that children acquire their television knowledge, but also to a large and significant extent from adult entertainment programmes.

Television and radio in the future

Certain under-resourced or disadvantaged groups of children thus watch television more than other children. Even if the results of research into children with different backgrounds are by no means exhaustive, we can also note that television in some respects leads to a deterioration of the terms on which these under-resourced groups live. But at the same time, research affords examples indicating the possibility of radio and television functioning in the contrary direction.

It has also emerged that the under-resourced children comprise the majority of all children. If one is concerned, via radio and television, to do something for the under-resourced or disadvantaged groups, one must therefore specify more exactly what types of resource or resources one considers most essential to deal with (e.g. linguistic resources). One can also specify one or more groups of children to whom one knows it to be important to cater (e.g. those with impaired hearing, and/or immigrant children), or believes to be important to cater (e.g. the children living in sterile suburbs). A third possibility is to aim at one or more groups of children who have really been "knocked out of the race" (research has demonstrated, for example, that so-called drop-outs, i.e. those leaving school before Grade 9, are often under-resourced in numerous respects).

It may, however, seem unsatisfactory to, at the same time, be more or less disregarding, in the programme activities, the bulk of other types of resources, and the other under-resourced children. Still it may be impossible to produce special programmes for them, since programme time is limited and must provide for everyone. One will then have to resort to a different solution, namely to try to combat the factors most decisive for being under-stimulated or under-privileged.

In this respect, empirical investigations afford contradictory results as to what is really cause and effect. When, for example, a child has difficulty in learning to read, it can be a sign of inadequate emotional stimulation and insufficient self-confidence. But it can also be due to inadequate cognitive resources and non-habituation with thinking in such terms, or quite simply a lack of motivation. One must realise that traditional empirical research never with certainty will be able to indicate what measures are the most suitable in order to alter the unsatisfactory state of things. This is because this type of research cannot study all phenomena in the past and present at once. Instead, one has to rely on the theoretical views. The empirical studies provide support, particularly in details, for certain theories. Then, when the statistics are no longer sufficient, one must work from the theory or explanatory model that oneself considers most reasonable.

We have summarised a succession of possible causes of under-stimulation and weakness of resources suggested by the research on children, and in the debate, both short-term causes and more fundamental ones - such as the specialisation in the society, the dissolution of ties of kinship and friendship, the current conceptions of freedom, and the economic system. With other explanatory models, one may arrive at other causes.

What, then does it mean to try to combat the factors most decisive for being under-stimulated and under-privileged?

First of all: who are in fact the under-resourced, under -stimulated, or under-privileged children? When defining them so far, we have started from the premiss of children's situation in society at present. But the fact that some children are under-resourced is just one of many phenomena in society that it can be desirable to change. In the first section of this chapter, a whole flora of other undesirable phenomena were indicated, for example the anonymity (does this apply only to the under-resourced?) and the environmental pollution. When the whole was seen in a larger perspective and as a historical process, the various different abuses in all probability hang together.

If one is concerned to do something for the under-resourced children, and concentrates exclusively on them, there is thus a great risk of one's not solving other problems. This involves, in its turn, another great risk, namely that one will simply be adapting the under-resourced to our present society, which will then continue to develop in the same direction as previously, creating the whole time the conditions in which new groups of under-resourced persons can emerge. If one is concerned to do something for the under-resourced, then one is concerned at the same time to achieve a society in which fewer people than at present, and preferably none at all, run the risk of being under-resourced - isn't one?

This has also another consequence: it is not certain that those who are under-resourced in the present society also will be so in the desired society. To be under-resourced does not mean that one is totally lacking in resources, but often that one has insufficient resources to cope in the present system, or that one's resources are not being attended to and stimulated in the right way.

If one is concerned to do something for the under-resourced, this therefore also implies that one must set out, first and foremost, to think out the objectives of the desired society. The objectives of the desired society every one must form an opinion of. We want to discern the following four groups of human (social) objectives or values:

1) Equality; equal value, equal rights, equal opportunities.
2) Freedom; identity, self-confidence, self-realisation (the right to develop one's personal resources), opportunities to influence and change one's situation (at the local, national, and global levels).
3) Security; togetherness, love, appreciation, status.
4) Solidarity; collaboration, respect for other people, solidarity with animals and nature, opportunities and the will to influence and change the situation of others in accordance with 1), 2) and 3) (at the local, national, and global levels).

Obviously, these objectives also apply to children.

But are they not, on the whole, those objectives that have actually been established for our society? Do they not roughly resemble the UN Declaration of Human Rights? Are not some of them at least contained in the official curriculum of the Basic School, published in 1969, and in the goals of the preschool system in Sweden? Yes, they are nothing new. But most people who have worked with questions relating to the situation of children in recent years consider that society has failed to realise these objectives, above all in the case of children.

They have therefore presented a long succession of proposals to improve the situation of children, and families with children. These proposals vary from isolated, spot efforts, to more thorough-going changes. Some examples:

Introduce a 6-hour workday for the parents of small children. Make it easier for fathers to be at home and look after their children. Let different ages and generations meet each other more often - let, for example, the pensioners work in the day care centers. Co-ordinate the school and working life. Relate what is taught by the schools more to the experience of the children. Utilise children's spontaneous curiosity and activity. Stimulate the children to discover and analyse the world around them on their own, and to work out the solutions to problems - when one is involved practically in something oneself, one searches for knowledge and understands why. Train the children's critical thinking. The schools are not there to measure aptitude, but to cultivate it. We must believe in and work from the innate resources of each child. We must give children meaningful tasks, greater responsibility, and co-influence. We must change the situation on the children's and the parents' own terms, by increasing their awareness of their situation, and the causes of it, and thus giving them greater opportunities and a greater belief that they can alter their own conditions of life. We must actively combat the sex-roles. We must listen more to children. We must give children love, standards, and guidance - clearly expressed objectives for the upbringing of children do not necessarily imply coercion or authority. The family must be opened up to the world around it. All adults must assume the responsibility for all children. We must see the child as a whole human being. We must adopt a global view of life, combat environmental pollution, and work for a redistribution of world resources.

While agreement on these and other proposals has varied, there also appear to exist certain general objectives that are accepted by the great majority:

Far greater attention than previously must be paid to the situations and terms of children.

We must concern ourselves more than previously with togetherness, love, collaboration, and solidarity.

We must concern ourselves more than previously with social and economic equality.

Many people expressly consider that individualism, personal liberties and economic liberty have been accorded excessive free play - that a one-sided emphasis on precisely these aims has led in practice to great freedom for some and limited freedom for others. By making a greater effort to achieve other goals at the same time, it should also be easier to achieve freedom for greater numbers.

Only at this point is it in place to consider once more the concepts of "under-resourced", "under-stimulated" and "under-privileged" groups. Then we find that the definitions are no longer as self-evident. If we change the emphasis in the objectives, and concentrate more on the children's situations and terms, more on togetherness, love, collaboration and solidarity, and more on socio-economic equality than hitherto, then the meaning of the terms under-resourced, disadvantaged etc. groups becomes different from the conventional use.

Researchers aiming solely at achieving a reputation, for example, are under-resourced. As are experts who use their knowledge as a means of power, for example by using a language such that they do not make themselves understood. Television producers who make programmes more for their colleagues than for the audience are disadvantaged. Those who have consciously profited from others, or by the destruction of nature belong to the group people with special needs. And those who are not seriously involved in the lives of children are under-privileged.

To be able to achieve the desired society we must thus from now on concern ourselves both with those who are under-privileged in the traditional sense, and those who are privileged in the traditional sense. This applies to the efforts made by both the ether media and others. As a consequence, a television or radio programme that is striving towards the overriding objectives may actually be easier to follow for traditionally under-privileged children, and more difficult for the traditionally privileged.

Another consequence is that the knowledge which it is essential to deal with in the programmes is that which forms a synthesis with the overriding objectives. It is thus the thrust of the knowledge which is important, not the volume of knowledge, nor knowledge irrespective of type. Examples of important knowledge could be increased insight into human relationships, and an increased awareness of the ownership structure of business and industry. Similar arguments apply with regard to emotions, norms and values, and when it comes to the stimulation and activation of viewers and listeners.

We can thus lay it down that the concepts of under-resourced, under-privileged, disadvantaged etc. groups, as casually used in the present situation, are diffuse expressions which serve, if anything, to reinforce the present social system - thus a contrary effect to what is usually intended when these terms are used. They give the impression of small groups with certain inadequate properties, groups that one should feel pity for and assist, while at the same time only those who are not under-resourced appear as the active ones. In actual fact, it is usually a question of setting up such objectives, and trying to achieve them in such a way, that all people, also the majority of children and adults, shall have equal opportunities of being active themselves.

Obviously, television and radio cannot solely by themselves achieve particularly great changes. Nor, by the very nature of the media, can they provide resources at all levels with any particular efficiency. But even if television and radio can only make a minor contribution, partly by changing themselves, partly by supporting a desired social development, this is no decisive reason to refrain, or to give up. Greater emphasis on the overriding objectives that we have discerned in the research and in the debate on children, are thus some proposals as to how the ether media could moderate the negative influences of television, and somewhat offset the worse opportunities available to many different groups of children.

Conclusions and proposals

The Broadcasting Commission, under the heading "General aspects of programme policy" in its report, and in several other places in the text, observes that "radio and television should pay increased attention to the interests, needs and conditions of various disadvantaged groups". Examples of groups mentioned are ethnic and linguistic minorities, physically and mentally handicapped, people with impaired sight and hearing. In general, however, the term disadvantaged groups is used also in a wider sense.

In our opinion, too, it is very important to do something for the groups examplified. As to facts, we are also very positive to the Commission's emphasis on increased consideration to "various disadvantaged groups" in a wider sense. But we object to the actual lable "disadvantaged groups". What we have tried to show in this chapter is, among other things, that this expression, and expressions of similar kind, involve a number of risks.

There is a great risk of "various disadvantaged groups" being seen as a small proportion of the population. As a matter of fact, the expression, unless more closely defined, refers to the majority of both children and adults, thus implying that "radio and television should pay increased attention to the interests, needs and conditions of the majority".

There is also a great risk of expressions like "disadvantaged groups" creating a conception of inadequate properties. Usually, however, it is a question of inadequate opportunities, which can be improved.

A third major risk, unless one specifies which groups and opportunities one has in mind, is that one will find oneself in blind alleys when considering what kind of increased attention one should pay to "disadvantaged groups". Groups are "disadvantaged" or have worse opportunities in relation to one or more objectives, which must first be set up. As a result, those who are "disadvantaged" today may not be so tomorrow. To give a simplified example: if one find it essential to "return to nature", then those who are now geographically "disadvantaged" might instead in the future perspective be the privileged.

A fourth great risk is then that a general, unspecified use of expressions like "disadvantaged groups" will imply a stand in favour of the present state of affairs, although one was concerned to achieve a change.

To be able to decide how far one should aim directly at "various disadvantaged groups" and how far one should instead look forward, it is necessary, in summary, consistently to specify what groups, opportunities and objectives one has in mind.

We have also tried to pick out the groups, opportunities and objectives that the research and debate on children during the Seventies has concluded that society should invest in. There is great agreement that far more attention than previously should be paid to the situation of children, and the terms on which they live. Several people who have worked with questions relating to children have actually stressed that the decisive measure of a nation's worth or viability is its concern for the next generation. The literature and numerous statements about children reflect a very pessimistic view of the situation - children are far too often ignored.

Nor are the opportunities of all children anything like equal. For children in general, and those with worse opportunities, to be able to develop into people with a rich emotional and mental life, and an ability to make their own judgments and suggest solutions to problems, such objectives as togetherness, love, collaboration, solidarity, and social and economic equality are emphasised.

What, then, can radio and television do for the great majority of groups with worse opportunities? There are, of course, no reach-me-down solutions. But as we understand it, both radio and television already do a great deal to support these overriding objectives.

Programmes are produced, for example, which try to give impulses to contacts between children and adults. There are programmes showing how ordinary children and adults achieve, in critical situations, something of importance to others. There are programmes showing that people are not alone in their predicament, and programmes in which the ages and generations are mixed.

There are also programmes which show the situations of different groups in the society, comparing their opportunities, and analysing the consequences of the differences. Programmes that are concrete and relevant. Programmes that strive to present an overall picture, and true contexts. Programmes that demonstrate that it is worth trying to exert influence, and that strengthen self-confidence, empathy, critical thought and independent action on the part of the children and adults watching and listening.

There are also the efforts made by producers and others to get out among people and meet them on their own terms, and acquire a greater practical experience of the various conditions and opportunities of both children and adults. There are, as well, the efforts to let children and adults participate in different ways in the production.

The Broadcasting Commission has, indeed, also many views that should reinforce or facilitate a development in this direction. But the Commission gives with one hand and takes with the other. In the case of children, and particularly of children with inadequate opportunities, such a development is severely obstructed by the Commission's opinions regarding, for example, violence-as-entertainment, the imports of foreign programmes, and daytime transmissions. As far as children are concerned, these proposals will mean increased viewing both totally, and in respect of precisely these programmes. As a result, several undesirable influences from television will be intensified (see the chapter "How children are influenced by television").

But must all programmes, then, be "Sunday-school" in type, boring, and dull?

As long as one starts from and analyses reality in order to find solutions to conflicts, there is no risk of programmes being too sqeaky clean. As long as one strives to give greater opportunities for more people to have an influence over their lives, the chances are greater that more people will find the programmes uplifting, or exciting. And programmes based on love and togetherness should provide great free play for breathtaking perspectives, fantasy, joy and emotion. What is currently offered by, for example, many of the heroes in the present entertainment series is pleasure at the expense of others. Nor is it a question of trying to present some cosmetic, ideal picture in the programmes. The essential thing is that it should be possible to motivate the programmes with reference to the overriding objectives.

It should also be easier to achieve "variety, balance, impartiality and an extensive freedom of speech and information" if one emphasises objectives which will entail that more people than at present can make their voices heard, and that the world around us more than at present can be seen and heard from the standpoints of children, and the standpoints of many various groups.

In Conclusion

We have summarised the Swedish research experience regarding children, television and radio in some fields with which one should be familiar if one is to pronounce or make decisions concerning not only children's programmes but above all adult programmes and the mass media situation at large. We have also drawn conclusions from the research results, and criticised the report of the Broadcasting Commission. But our intention, of course, is that these summaries of the research can be used also in other contexts.

The Broadcasting Commission lays down many essential objectives: The time devoted by the individual to radio and television should be richer in content, and more rewarding. Radio and television have a fundamental responsibility to provide information and emotional experience. Radio and television should endeavour to stimulate, develop and emancipate the individual by offering a varied, rich, many-facetted, exciting and entertaining cultural material. To satisfy the need for entertainment, radio and television should offer a wealth of dramatised programmes. Radio and television should also activate the audience, have an international thrust, and combat the risks of levelling-down and a one-sided cultural influence etc.

Other proposals by the Broadcasting Commission to which we are positive are, for example, that radio and television should assert the parity between men and women, and pay special attention to persons with impaired sight and hearing, and to linguistic and ethnic minorities.

The purpose of our criticism, however, has been to discuss those proposals or opinions on the part of the Commission that we consider to be particularly relevant to children, and to have negative consequences for children. These proposals and opinions are disturbingly many. In actual fact, the Commission has neglected to draw any conclusions from the facts available as to how children use and are influenced by television and radio. The report mentions children a few times. The Commission emphasises that children's programmes should exist. This is very important, and laudable. But then the report more or less abandons the children. The result will be that several of the negative influences already exercised on children by television will be further reinforced.

The Broadcasting Commission repeats that "radio and television should pay increased attention to the interests, needs, and conditions of various disadvantaged groups". Nor are children a homogeneous or static group. They have their varying interests, needs, and conditions both while they are growing up and subsequently as adults. But for those children who themselves, or together with their parents or other adults, have less opportunities to influence their situation, the Commission's proposals will mean even more clearly marked negative influences from television.

The gap between the Commission's finely phrased objectives and the real conditions in which its proposals will operate is often too large. In the case of children, however, there are actually several deviations from the objectives postulated.

For the aims and objectives not to be just words of honour, for children, too, as well as "various disadvantaged groups", actually to be given better opportunities for stimulation, development, and emancipation, it is necessary with a following-up in practice. This means that also the interests, needs and conditions of children, and of groups with worse opportunities, should be made the focus of the rules governing radio and television activities and - not least - the concrete proposals made to realise the objectives.

What we wish to underline is that the responsibility for the child audience must be borne by both the children's programme divisions and those producing for adults. Nor is it enough just to create some programmes with the desired objectives in view. As far as conceivably possible, every programme and series, and this is valid for the entire supply - children's programmes, information programmes, entertainment programmes - as well as the purposes and structure of the Corporation should be comprehensible in terms of the overriding objectives.

Children belong to the same society as adults. The goals set for children and adults can therefore not differ. On the contrary, various changes must cater both to the needs of children and those of adults.

The changing of a society is usually a slow process. Far too many people tend to shoulder off the problems onto the next generation. By comparison with children, the majority of adults, regardless of their situation, are privileged, in the sense that we are in a better position to influence development. We, the adults, must therefore clarify and realise the objectives - also on the children's behalf. No problems will be solved by refusing to take sides, or by surrounding ourselves with empty phrases. Because that too, whether we want it or not, will also promote a development towards certain goals.

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The chapter "How children are influenced by television":

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The chapter "Purchases of foreign television programmes":

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